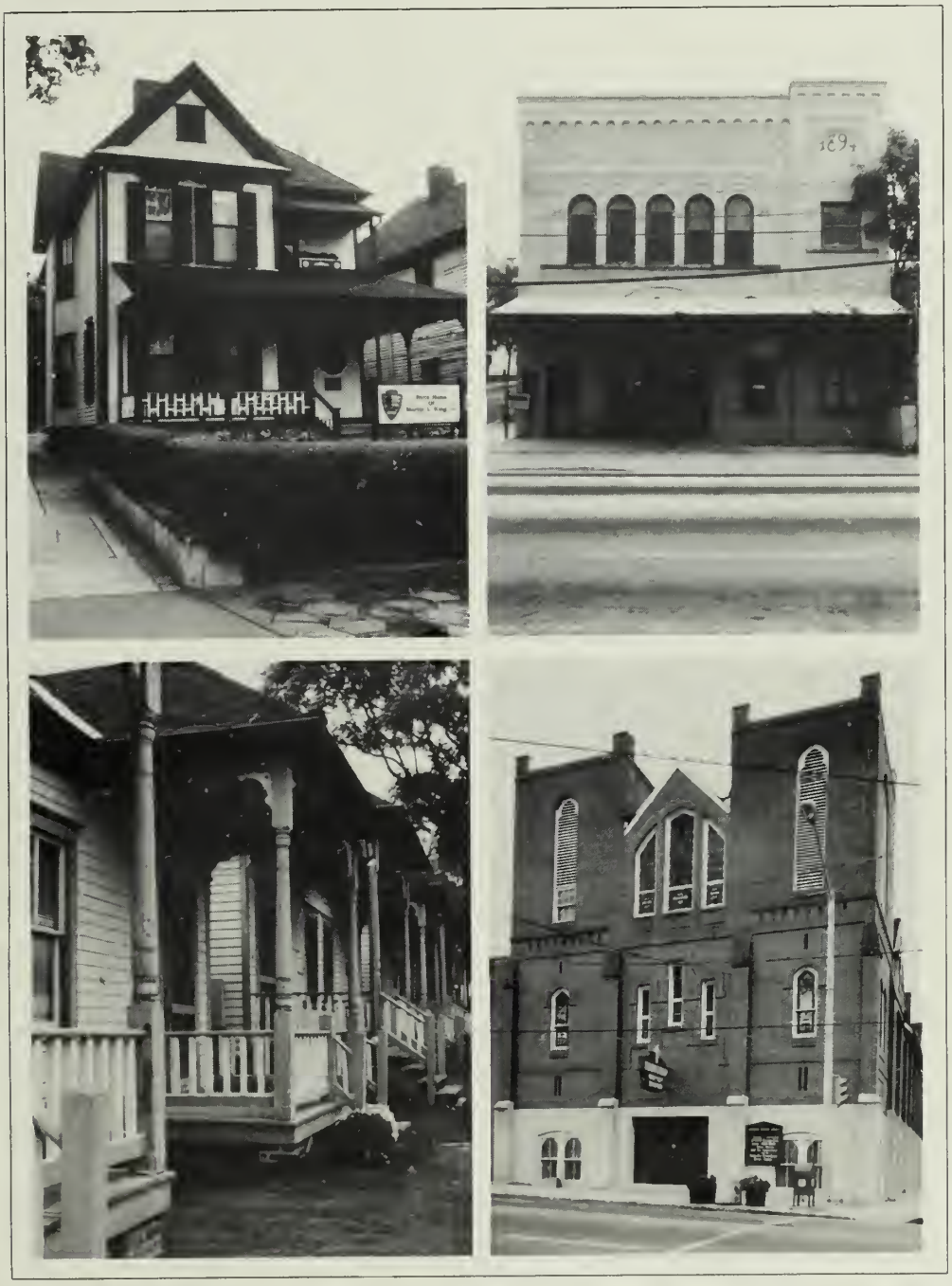
PUBLIC DOCUMENTS
DEPOSITORY ITEM
NOV 1 4 1994
CLEMSON
LIBRARY

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE
HISTORIC RESOURCE STUDY



FEDERAL
PUBLICATION

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR • NATIONAL PARK SERVICE • SOUTHEAST REGION

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.
NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

HISTORIC RESOURCE STUDY

August 1994

Robert W. Blythe
Maureen A. Carroll
Steven H. Moffson

Cultural Resources Planning Division
Southeast Regional Office
National Park Service, Department of the Interior

On the cover: clockwise from upper left, Martin Luther King, Jr., Birth Home, Atlanta Fire Station Number 6, Ebenezer Baptist Church, double shotgun houses on Auburn Avenue.

Foreword

Several years ago, the Cultural Resources Planning Division undertook a complete restructuring of the historical research program in the Southeast Region. A multidisciplinary team was assembled, field surveys were begun, and intensive primary and secondary research initiated into the origins and significance of the historic structures and landscapes of National Park Service units in the Southeast Region. This Historic Resource Study is the first of many to treat the historic resources of the parks in a holistic manner, establishing the relevant historic contexts, and containing the information necessary to list all of the eligible resources in the National Register of Historic Places. We have, in the process of developing this study, updated the park's List of Classified Structures and transferred the text of this document to National Register forms to update the Historic Site's listing. It is our hope that this study will provide clear guidance to park management about the historic values embodied in this unit of the National Park System. Finally, we are grateful for the recognition accorded this report by the Vernacular Architecture Forum, which selected the draft as the recipient of its 1994 Paul E. Buchanan Award for the best unpublished work in this field.

Kirk A. Cordell
Chief
Cultural Resources Planning Division
National Park Service Southeast Region
August 1994

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2012 with funding from
LYRASIS Members and Sloan Foundation

http://archive.org/details/martinlutherking00blyt

Contents

Introduction 1

Chapter 1 The Development of a Black Community and Leader: Atlanta's Auburn Avenue Neighborhood and Martin Luther King, Jr., 1906-1948 15

Chapter 2 Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Leadership of the American Civil Rights Movement, 1955-1968 33

Chapter 3 Architectural Resources of the Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site, ca. 1880-1950 . . 53

Chapter 4 Expansion of the Site Boundary 91

Chapter 5 Management Recommendations 95

Bibliography 99

Appendix A Historical Base Map A-1

Appendix B Building Descriptions B-1

Appendix C National Register Form C-1

Maps

Map 1 Location of Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site 6

Map 2 Martin Luther King, Jr.,
National Historic Site and Preservation District 9

Photographs

Photograph 1 Auburn Avenue with downtown Atlanta in background 3

Photograph 2 Two-story residences on Auburn Avenue with shotgun houses behind 21

Photograph 3 Two-room double shotgun houses on alley leading from Auburn Avenue 21

Photograph 4 King family, 1939 or 1940 23

Photograph 5 Martin Luther King, Jr., Birth Home, 501 Auburn Avenue . . 26

Photograph 6 Program, Ebenezer Baptist Church, June 13, 1965 40

Photograph 7 Martin Luther King, Jr., Tomb 48

Photograph 8 North side of Auburn Avenue between Hogue and Howell Streets 54

Photograph 9 Edgewood Avenue 56

Photograph 10 Brick sidewalk, north side of Auburn Avenue east of Howell Street 62

Photograph 11 521 Auburn Avenue and sidewalk store building 65

Photograph 12 522 Auburn Avenue 66

Photograph 13 Iron fence at 530 Auburn Avenue 69

Photograph 14 540 Auburn Avenue 69

Photograph 15 53 Hogue Street 70

Photograph 16 Double shotgun houses at 472-474 and 476-478 Auburn Avenue 72

Photograph 17 54 Howell Street 73

Photograph 18 467 Edgewood Avenue, former Brown Hayes store 77

Photograph 19 443-445 Edgewood Avenue 79

Photograph 20 439-441 Edgewood Avenue 79

Photograph 21 537 Edgewood Avenue 81

Photograph 22 476-478 Edgewood Avenue 81

Photograph 23 Atlanta Fire Station Number Six, 37-39 Boulevard 82

Photograph 24 Ebenezer Baptist Church, 407-413 Auburn Avenue 84

INTRODUCTION

Martin Luther King, Jr., is best known nationally and internationally for his leadership of the American Civil Rights Movement[1] and his subsequent efforts to promote world peace and economic equality. The Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site, located in the historic east side Atlanta black community where King was reared and to which he later returned in the height of his activism, commemorates King's lifetime achievements. The Site preserves the King Birth Home and the immediate historic black neighborhood where King spent his youth. The larger "Sweet Auburn" community, which served as the economic, cultural, and religious center for Atlanta's segregated black population from 1910 through the 1960s, greatly influenced King both as a youth and as an adult.

On January 15, 1929, Martin Luther King, Jr., was born in Atlanta at 501 Auburn Avenue within a prosperous black commercial and residential district. He lived in this house with his mother, father, grandparents, sister, brother, and an occasional boarder until he was twelve years old. King attended public schools nearby and walked to services at Ebenezer Baptist, where his maternal grandfather and father served as ministers. In 1941, the family moved to another house within the Auburn Avenue community, and King commuted to Atlanta University on the west side to attend high school classes. As an adult, King left Atlanta to attend Crozer Seminary, in Chester, Pennsylvania, near Philadelphia, and continued his education at Boston University. King led the members of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama, while completing his doctorate in theology at Boston University. After serving in Montgomery for six years, King traveled to Atlanta to help organize the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in 1957, and eventually moved to the city in 1960. The dominant force in the SCLC, King also co-pastored at Ebenezer Baptist Church in the Auburn Avenue community with his father.

---

[1]For purposes of this study, "Civil Rights Movement" refers to the campaigns of the 1950s and 1960s; organized activity on behalf of black civil rights dates at least to the founding of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1909.

Few nationally significant civil rights activities occurred under King's mantle in Atlanta. However, King served upon the governing board of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), headquartered in Atlanta, participated in a lunch counter boycott at Rich's department store, a well-known Atlanta commercial establishment, and supported black Atlanta union members in a strike. King's best known and most effective civil protests occurred outside Atlanta, particularly in Alabama, where blacks wielded little economic, social, or political power.

Nevertheless, the black commercial and residential district centered around Auburn Avenue and the prominent black religious institutions in the community had a lasting impact on King and other black community leaders. Throughout the South, civil rights activities relied on strong communities and outspoken religious leaders. Auburn Avenue and its surrounding black residential areas developed as a direct result of segregationist policies common throughout nineteenth- and twentieth-century southern urban centers. Within this milieu of hardship, black economic, cultural, and political institutions waxed, and in some cases, flourished. Auburn Avenue's vitality surpassed that achieved by many southern black communities. This unique community greatly influenced the life path chosen by King, to challenge racism, poverty, and the denial of black civil rights.

Auburn Avenue and its coterminous residential community developed as a stronghold of black Atlanta politics, commerce, spirituality, and social life. Sweet Auburn described the corridor east of Peachtree to Howell Avenue and north of Auburn to Houston Street. Edgewood Avenue, located just south of Auburn Avenue, developed later predominantly as a white commercial corridor. On both avenues, access to the central business district to the west via horse cars, streetcars, and eventually, private automobiles greatly augmented their growth (photograph 1). The first settlers along Auburn Avenue differed greatly in race and class from subsequent residents. In nineteenth-century cities, the elite occupied the residential areas located within walking distance of the central business district. As the Atlanta city limits widened from one concentric mile in the 1840s to one and one-half miles in the 1890s, elite residential settlement branched out, and patterns of settlement along Auburn Avenue changed. The avenue was predominantly black by 1910.

Martin Luther King, Jr., matured within a unique environment of black independence and progress, in a city that defined its black citizens as economically and socially inferior, and in an era that promised little black opportunity outside of prescribed roles. Between 1910 and 1960, the Auburn Avenue black community hummed. From Courtland Street to Randolph Street, food and drug stores, movie theaters, barber shops and beauty parlors, banks, insurance companies, restaurants, newspapers, and meeting halls, all owned and operated by black entrepreneurs, lined the street. Three churches towered over Auburn Avenue, and their ministers

Photograph 1
Auburn Avenue with downtown Atlanta in background

demanded from members participation in spiritual, social, and civic progress. Middle class professionals, ministers, skilled craftsmen, laborers, and domestics all resided on or near Auburn, thriving for several decades within the black world they nurtured.

At his birth in 1929, King became part of an economically and socially prosperous community, but one which also struggled within the confines of racial segregation. King's childhood in this community combined racial pride and progress with persistent fears of economic decline and the humiliation associated with unpredictable and irrational racial prejudice. Within a few years of King's birth, the Depression began to take its toll upon the community, especially the residential section. Black professionals exited the community for new residential areas to the west, leaving behind laboring residents unable or unwilling to invest money and time into older, often rented dwellings. As the century progressed, Auburn Avenue's commercial vitality persisted, but decades of poverty and neglect had degraded the housing.

Between 1929 and 1941, King and his family lived at 501 Auburn Avenue, in a two-story, Queen Anne house. His neighbors included black professionals like Charles Harper, the first principal of Booker T. Washington High School, as well as skilled and unskilled laborers. The blocks between Boulevard and Howell Street had two-story Queen Anne houses and modest two- to three-room vernacular dwellings.

Originally, the entire area east of Jackson Street (the Site's western boundary) and north and south of the Site was predominantly residential. King attended David T. Howard Elementary School, several blocks north of his home, played in grassed vacant lots behind his house along Edgewood Avenue, and frequented several corner stores within a two-block vicinity. Auburn Avenue west of Jackson Street consisted of denser commercial development. Ebenezer Baptist Church straddled the commercial and residential boundary.

In 1941, the King family moved north of Auburn Avenue, to a middle-class residential area known as Bishop's Row at Boulevard and Houston. King's house was demolished to make way for the Freedom Parkway. Daddy King, young King's father, still ministered at Ebenezer Baptist Church, and King attended services there until he left Atlanta to pursue his theological education in Pennsylvania and Boston. Ebenezer later played an important role in King's return to Atlanta in 1960. King followed in his father's footsteps, pastoring at Ebenezer and utilizing his pulpit and its conferred social status to help organize black civil rights activities in Atlanta and across America.

Ebenezer Baptist Church symbolizes both King's individual efforts toward achieving racial equality and the impressive role black clergymen played in post-World War II civil rights activities. Black clergymen traditionally had great prestige and authority in the black community, but prior to the 1950s, they rarely led civil rights protests that extended beyond their church membership or community. A new generation of southern black ministers, including King, Rev. Ralph David Abernathy, Rev. C. K. Steele, and Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth, took the lead in the fight against segregation on a national level. King urged civil rights activists to utilize the Christian doctrines of nonviolence, redemption through suffering, and love for all enemies in their protests. Having studied the principles of civil disobedience exemplified by Henry David Thoreau and Mohandas Gandhi, King and the SCLC developed new strategies utilizing massive peaceful marches and demonstrations to confront the southern system of segregation. Beginning with the boycott of segregated buses in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1955-1956, King spearheaded the movement that spread throughout the South and elicited considerable sympathy among whites nationally.

Through the SCLC, King supported local movements against segregation in Birmingham and Selma, Alabama; Albany, Georgia; St. Augustine, Florida; and elsewhere. Demonstrations planned or led by King often were brutally repressed by white authorities, resulting in intensive national media coverage of these events. The attention that King focused on the plight of southern blacks was instrumental in gaining passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, major legislative victories for the Civil Rights Movement. King received numerous

awards, including the 1964 Nobel Peace Prize, in recognition of his nonviolent civil rights work.

The assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., in Memphis, Tennessee, on April 4, 1968, robbed the American Civil Rights Movement of one of its most effective and respected leaders. Following his death, SCLC and other black activist organizations continued civil protests. But these organizations' beliefs and tactics varied widely, and their subsequent campaigns never gained the cohesion which, although fragile at times, generally characterized the progressive campaigns led by King.

DESCRIPTION OF MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

The Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site is a small, urban park located in the city of Atlanta, Fulton County, Georgia. Containing approximately 38 acres, 4.78 of which are federally owned, the Site lies 1-1/4 miles east of the central business district (map 1).[2]

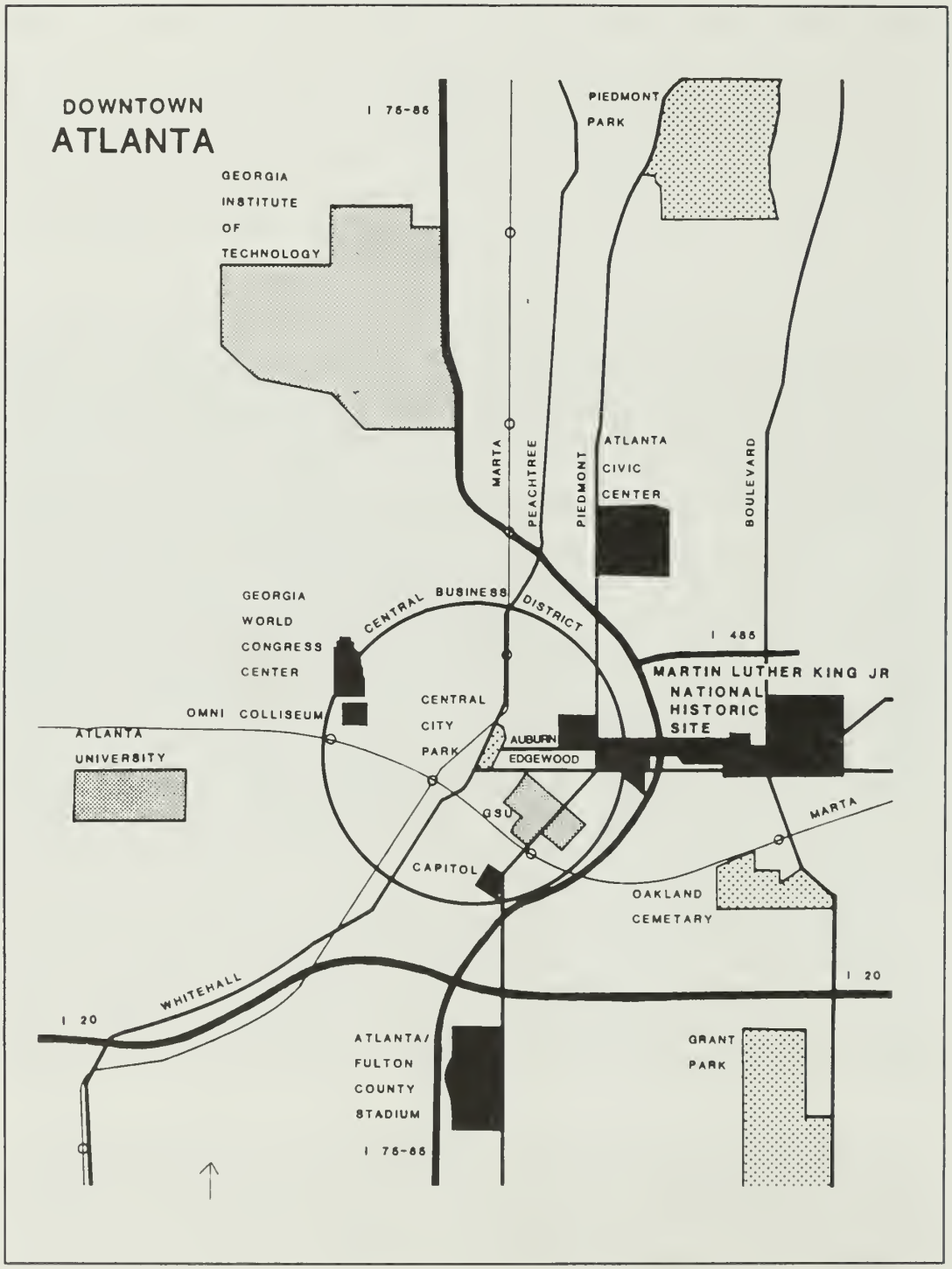
Most properties within the Site front one of two avenues running east and west, Auburn Avenue and Edgewood Avenue. The Site is irregularly shaped and roughly bounded by Jackson Street on the west, Cain Street on the north from Jackson to Boulevard, Old Wheat Street on the north between Boulevard and Howell Street, Howell Street on the east, and the rear property lines on the south side of Edgewood Avenue. Current land use within the Site is mostly residential on Auburn Avenue and largely commercial on Edgewood Avenue and north of Irwin Street. The Site is located in a predominantly black residential and commercial area characterized by low-income housing in poor condition and moderate commercial activity on Edgewood and along Auburn Avenue west of the Site. The Martin Luther King, Jr., Center for Nonviolent Social Change, Inc. (King Center), is located on the west side of the Site and occupies an entire city block.[3]

The Site commemorates the life and accomplishments of Martin Luther King, Jr., a prominent leader of the American Civil Rights Movement during the 1950s and 1960s. Federal legislation established the Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site and Preservation District on October 10, 1980, to "protect and interpret for the benefit, inspiration, and education of present and future generations the places where

---

[2]The 1980 legislation (Public Law 96-428) creating the Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site authorized a 23.78-acre park roughly bounded by Jackson Street on the west, Old Wheat Street on the north, Howell Street on the east, and the rear property lines on the south side of Edgewood Avenue. The Reclamation Projects Authorization and Adjustment Act of 1992, enacted October 30, 1992, expanded the park boundaries to include properties lying between Jackson Street and Boulevard north to Cain Street.

[3]The legislation that created the Site also authorized the ultimate acquisition of the Atlanta house occupied by Martin Luther King, Jr., and his widow, Coretta Scott King.



Map 1
Location of Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site

Martin Luther King, Junior, was born, where he lived, worked, and worshipped, and where he is buried."[4] Historic resources within the Site include the houses along the block where King was born (Birth-Home Block), Ebenezer Baptist Church where King, his father, and grandfather were pastors, and commercial buildings along Edgewood Avenue. As noted, the legislation identifies the grave site of King as a resource requiring protection and interpretation. Since 1971, the King Center has housed the grave site, consisting of the marble tomb and eternal flame. The King Center, a modern complex built between 1971 and 1981, also includes a memorial plaza with a fountain, interpretive exhibits, a restaurant, and administrative offices. The National Park Service (NPS) does not contribute to interpretive programs at the gravesite. However, NPS does maintain the grave site at the King Center and conducts tours of the Birth Home.

The Martin Luther King, Jr., Preservation District (Preservation District), also established in the 1980 legislation, adjoins the Site on the east, north, and west and embraces the larger Auburn Avenue black community in which King grew up. The Preservation District links King's career to the black business, religious, social, and political organizations that flourished along Auburn Avenue prior to and during King's lifetime (map 2).[5]

Scope and Purpose of Historic Resource Study

This Historic Resource Study (HRS) identifies and evaluates the historic properties within the Site. The study establishes and documents historic contexts associated with the Site and then evaluates the extent to which the historic resources represent those contexts. The completed HRS will serve as a tool for future Site planning, resource management decisions, and the continuing development of interpretive programs at the Site.

---

[4]Public Law 96-428, October 10, 1980.

[5]Two National Register districts, the Martin Luther King, Jr., Historic District and the Sweet Auburn Historic District, were established in the 1970s and commemorate King and the historic Atlanta east-side black community. The Martin Luther King, Jr., Historic District was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974 and was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1977. The 1980 Martin Luther King, Jr., Preservation District, established by the Site's enabling legislation, includes all property listed in the 1974 historic district. The Sweet Auburn Historic District was made a National Historic Landmark in 1976. In addition, the city of Atlanta, through the Atlanta Urban Design Commission, established the Martin Luther King, Jr., Landmark District in 1989, consolidating two existing city preservation districts. Most of these districts overlap within the Site, providing protection through federal programs and local zoning ordinances.

The architectural resources of the Site primarily represent the formative years of King's life, from 1929 through 1948, rather than the events for which he subsequently gained national and international recognition. Although much of his civil rights activity occurred outside Atlanta, King resided in Atlanta from 1960 to 1968. He also established a base of operations for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in the city in 1957. Most of the resources within the Site are important for interpreting King's youth; Ebenezer Baptist Church is the only significant Site resource associated with King's adult career.

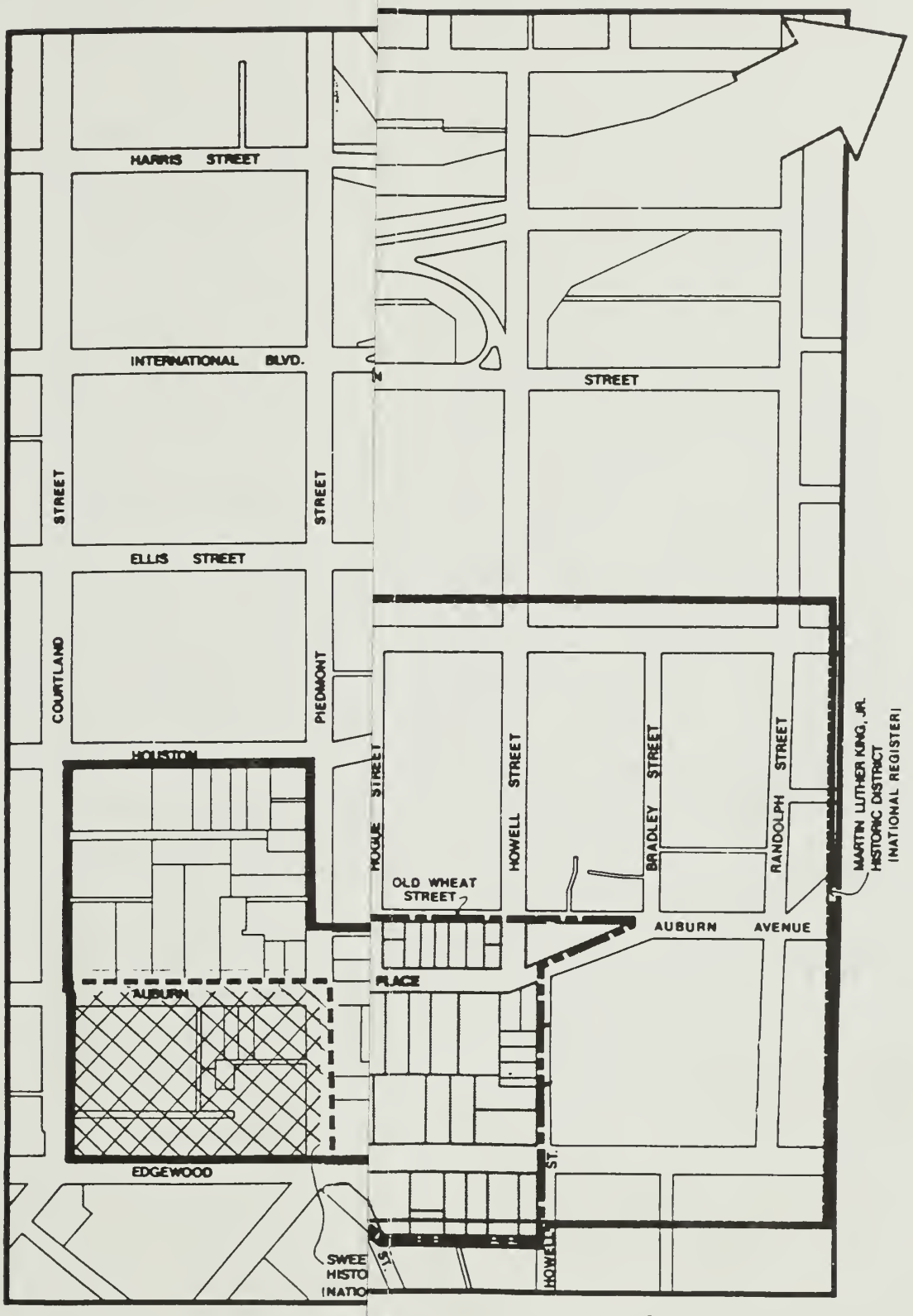
The Site is located in an urban area that has suffered significant deterioration in recent decades and continues to be threatened. Several architectural surveys have been conducted within the Site and the Preservation District. Although the park is listed in the National Register, many individual structures were not documented in the nomination, and a comprehensive interpretive study of the Site remains unfinished. The HRS and associated surveys will provide park management with a physical survey of structures, an interpretive framework for the Site, and National Register documentation for the park's historic resources.

Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

Survey Methodology

Goals of the historic resources survey of the Site are to 1) update the List of Classified Structures (LCS) database for the Site for use by park management; 2) prepare a Historic Resource Study for the Site; 3) update National Register documentation for the Site; 4) assemble a comprehensive inventory of the Site's historic structures, completing Georgia State Historic Preservation Office survey forms and a photographic record for each structure built prior to 1950 and considered eligible for listing in the National Register. The assembled documentation will be used in complying with Sections 106 and 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

Initially, the survey team examined building files, maintenance records, historic research compiled by the park staff, and maps at the park headquarters. The field survey of the park yielded information on the present condition of the historic resources. Additionally, the team reviewed archival materials at the Southeast Regional Office of the National Park Service (NPS) and at the Site. Research with primary and secondary sources was conducted at the park library, the Atlanta Historical Society, the Fulton County Clerk of Court, and elsewhere to obtain information on the Sweet Auburn neighborhood, the life of Martin Luther King, Jr., and the American Civil Rights Movement. Maps and Atlanta city directories helped trace the physical development of the area. The survey team relied heavily on several



Map 2

Martin Luther King, Jr.

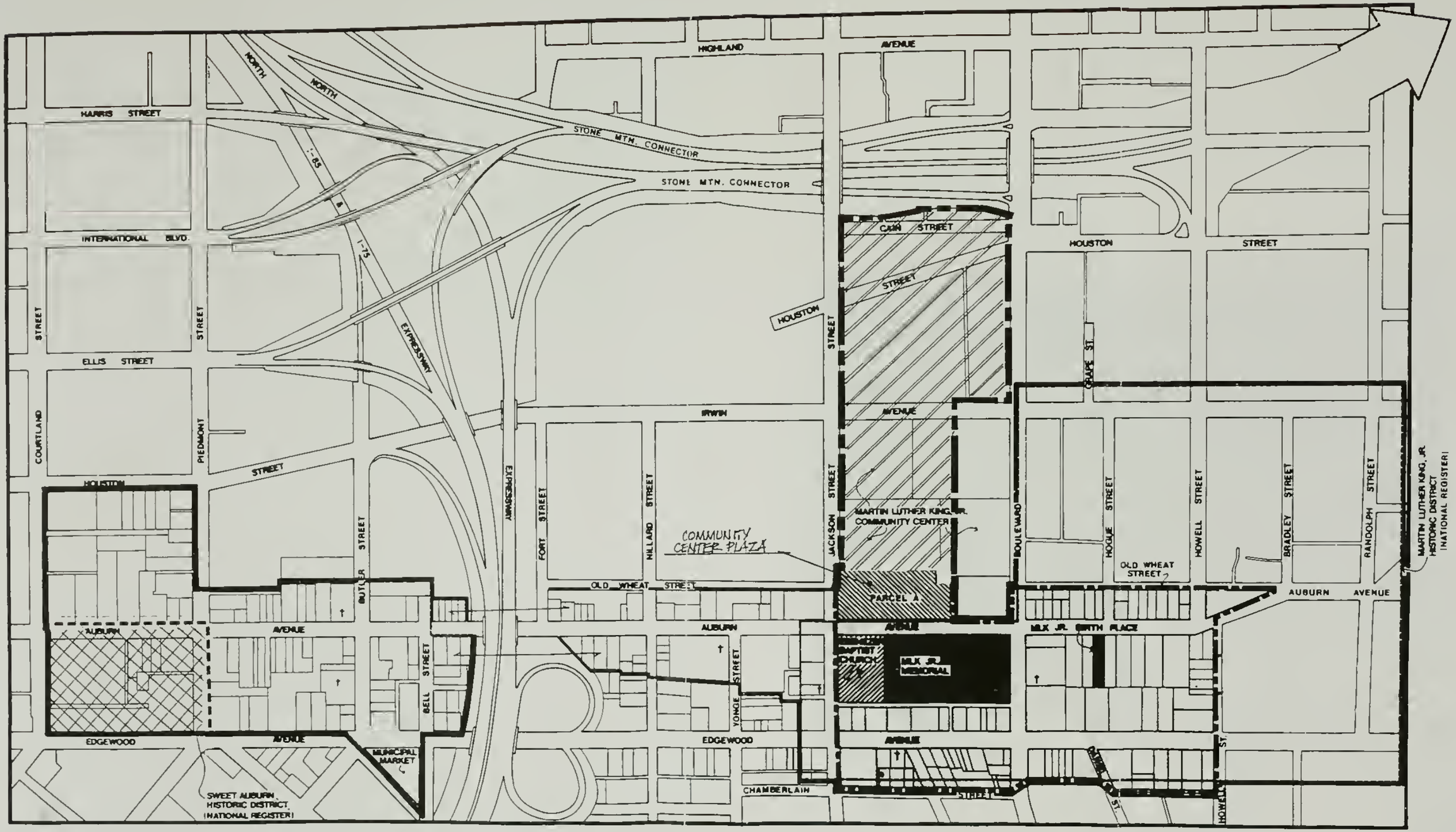
National Historic Site and
Preservation District

LEGEND

HISTORIC SITE BOUNDARY

PRESERVATION DISTRICT BOUNDARY

013 B
12



Map 2

Martin Luther King, Jr.

National Historic Site and
Preservation District

LEGEND

- HISTORIC SITE BOUNDARY
- PRESERVATION DISTRICT BOUNDARY
- NATIONAL REGISTER BOUNDARIES
- CHURCHES
- 1992 ADDITION TO NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE
- 1992 ADDITION TO PRESERVATION DISTRICT

0 250 500 1000 FEET

SCALE: 1 INCH = 360 FEET

N

489 | 80,013 B
Dec | 1992

unpublished studies of the Site and vicinity for specific information. Independent researchers and park staff previously compiled most of the necessary historic information, though several buildings with uncertain construction dates required additional research.

Determination of Historic Contexts

This study will assess and evaluate the Site's historic resources in relationship to three historic contexts identified by the survey team. These contexts correspond closely to historic themes identified by the NPS and the Georgia SHPO. The thematic framework of the NPS is outlined in *History and Prehistory in the National Park System and the National Historic Landmark Program*. In addition to general historical themes like "Architecture" or "Commerce," the Georgia SHPO has identified twelve distinctive aspects of Georgia history. These aspects are currently undeveloped but should be considered when assembling local and state context studies.

The following three historic contexts (chapters 1 through 3) were developed for this study: 1) The Development of a Black Community and Leader: Atlanta's Auburn Avenue Neighborhood and Martin Luther King, Jr., 1906-1948; 2) Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Leadership of the American Civil Rights Movement, 1955-1968; and 3) Architectural Resources of the Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site, ca. 1880-1950.

The first context, The Development of a Black Community and Leader: Atlanta's Auburn Avenue Neighborhood and Martin Luther King, Jr., 1906-1948, relates to the NPS subtheme "Ethnic Communities" of Theme XXX, "American Ways of Life." This context also relates to two aspects of Georgia history: "Large Black Population and Strong Cultural Presence" and "Conflict and Accommodation in Race Relations." The context addresses the physical, social, and economic environment in which Martin Luther King, Jr., was reared. The Site embraces only a portion of the Auburn Avenue neighborhood, while the geographical area for this context encompasses an area akin to the Preservation District. Subthemes within this context include urban life, ethnic community growth and isolation, and occupational and class distinctions. The context begins in 1906, the year a bloody race riot signalled increased racial segregation patterns among black and white Atlantans, both residentially and commercially. The context ends in 1948, the year that King left Atlanta to pursue his education at Crozer Seminary in Pennsylvania.

Chapter 1 will briefly summarize the development of the Auburn Avenue black neighborhood. The chapter then will address the influence of the community on the intellectual and moral development of Martin Luther King, Jr. Throughout the period of significance, Auburn Avenue between Pryor on the west and Randolph on the east

was the focus of Atlanta's east-side black community. Many of the churches, businesses, and other institutions of key importance to the Auburn Avenue black community are located outside the boundaries of the Martin Luther King, Jr., Historic Site. Thus, a discussion of these community institutions is essential in establishing this context, but only those historic resources that lie within the historic site will be evaluated in relation to this context.

The second context, Martin Luther King, Jr., and the American Civil Rights Movement, 1955-1968, is closely related to the NPS subtheme "Civil Rights Movements" under Theme XXXI, "Social and Humanitarian Movements." The context relates to the Georgia SHPO contextual theme "Major Theater for Civil Rights Movement." Chapter 2 encompasses the period during which King was a nationally prominent civil rights leader. King's civil rights activity in Atlanta during the period was limited primarily to his involvement with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), Ebenezer Baptist Church, local lunch counter sit-ins, and a labor dispute at Scripto, Inc. Events occurring across America, many involving King, are important in establishing this context and will be briefly sketched. The chapter begins with the Montgomery, Alabama, bus boycott led by the city's religious leaders, including King, and ends with his death in Memphis, Tennessee.

The final context, Architectural Resources of the Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site, ca. 1880-1950 relates to NPS theme XVI, "Architecture" and to the Georgia SHPO historical theme, "Architecture."[6] This context addresses buildings possessing local architectural significance recognized under Criteria C. The context commences with the earliest building construction date within the Site. All buildings constructed prior to 1950 were surveyed; however, only in exceptional cases are buildings less than fifty years old eligible under this context. The Site's architectural resources represent residential and commercial buildings common in urban areas in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Few of these resources exhibit high-style architectural features, but they serve as good examples of local adaptations of popular methods of construction which often incorporate elements of nationally popular architectural styles.

Determination of Significant Property Types

Property types are determined by shared form, function, associations, events, or physical characteristics among a group of resources and may include buildings, sites,

---

[6]"Georgia Historic Resources Survey Manual" (Atlanta: Historic Preservation Section, Parks and Historic Sites Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, n.d.), 38-39; *History and Prehistory in the National Park System and the National Historic Landmarks Program* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1987), I-16, I-20, I-21.

structures, or objects. These property types are primarily based on a knowledge of historic contexts and then on whether the type is a manageable and efficient tool for setting requirements for National Register listing. Base property types relate to National Register criteria, either physical or associative, and illustrate the broadest possible range of applicable resources.

National Register Bulletin 16B discusses some applications of structural typology. "Property types may be defined to include resources that are associated with the general growth or prosperity influenced by the theme and that are not directly resultant from the predominant theme of the context." As an example, the bulletin states railroad-era buildings and structures "could include commercial buildings, public buildings, residences, bridges, storage sheds, as well as railroad stations and freighthouses" of the period.[7]

The historic resources of the Site, composed largely of residential and commercial buildings, derive their primary significance from their association with the life of Martin Luther King, Jr., and the American Civil Rights Movement. Many of these buildings also are eligible for listing in the National Register as examples of late nineteenth and early twentieth century urban structural fabric once common throughout Atlanta. Building typologies, such as double shotguns, provide a framework in which significant property types can be studied and their relationship to historic contexts solidified. Property types at the Site are based on massing, architectural style, function, and period of construction.

Derivation of Integrity Requirements

Requirements for integrity were based upon the property's association with the life of Martin Luther King, Jr., and the American Civil Rights Movement (Criteria A and B.) In addition, integrity requirements stress the physical characteristics of the properties (Criterion C) as they relate to location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Properties eligible for listing only under Criterion C are held to a higher standard of integrity than those eligible under Criteria A and B.

Historical Base Map Discussion

The historical base map (Appendix A) visually connects resources extant during the period of significance with the present physical environment. The historical base map for the Site illustrates the built, urban environment during the period King lived on Auburn Avenue (1929-1941). The map includes street layout, as well as residential

---

[7]*National Register Bulletin 16B: How to Complete the National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1991), 15.

and commercial buildings, alleys, and the spatial relationships among buildings and other urban structural features. Extant structures (1992) are represented by a solid line; extant historic structures are shaded; and nonextant historic structures, including streetcar lines, alleys, and buildings, are indicated by a broken line. All nonextant historic structures were present during the period of significance; some have been replaced by nonhistoric buildings. Thus, broken line building footprints and solid line imprints in some cases are overlaid. Buildings destroyed or replaced by other structures within the period of significance are not indicated. Thus structural change within the period of significance is not discernable. Two important environmental features—the presence of alleys, both dirt and paved, and streetcar lines—are illustrated by broken lines indicating that they are no longer extant. A second map is included that indicates the street addresses of extant historic buildings. All of these structures except King's grave site were present during the period of significance. The grave site is an eligible historic resource that falls outside the period of significance (see page 51). Additional information on the historic structures is provided in Appendix B, Building Descriptions.

The historical base map best illustrates the use of space in an early twentieth century black neighborhood. Closely spaced housing and commercial buildings are located on major city thoroughfares and narrow alleys. Outbuildings for autos and storage are abundant, and the corner store also is a common feature. Detailed landscape features on the Birth-Home Block, such as sidewalk pavement, fencing, location of utility lines, street lighting, and fire hydrants will be illustrated on maps included in the Cultural Landscape Report.

Several sources were consulted to compose the historical base map: 1911 and 1932 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, a 1928 City Engineer (Atlanta) Topographic Map, and two aerial photographs taken by the Soil Conservation Service in 1939 and the Atlanta Metropolitan Planning Commission in 1949. Historic photograph collections at the Atlanta Historical Society, the Georgia Department of Archives and History, and the Georgia State Labor History Archives were consulted. Also, a Works Projects Administration cadastral map (1937) and City of Atlanta Council Meeting Minutes verified changes and additions to the urban environment including alleys, paving, water sources, and streetcar lines.

CHAPTER ONE

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A BLACK COMMUNITY AND LEADER: ATLANTA'S AUBURN AVENUE NEIGHBORHOOD AND MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., 1906-1948

During Martin Luther King, Jr.'s youth, Atlanta's Auburn Avenue neighborhood was a vital, largely self-contained black community.[8] A product of segregation, the community included laborers and domestic workers as well as successful professionals and businessmen. King grew up understanding both the limits imposed by segregation and the achievements that blacks accomplished in spite of it. The Auburn Avenue environment helped shape King's mature views on racial harmony and social justice.

The Auburn Avenue community developed against a backdrop of increasingly rigid, legally enforced racial segregation and the effective disfranchisement of blacks throughout the American South in the 1890s and 1900s. Following the end of Reconstruction in 1877, inconsistency and flux characterized southern race relations. Before 1900, few southern states required segregation in public places. Separation in public activities was common, but local racial protocol varied considerably. In urban areas, limited racial mixing on public carriers, in common areas, and even in work places testified to the fragile foothold that blacks had established in municipalities. The political participation of southern blacks also varied considerably in this period. Beginning in the 1890s, however, southern whites fashioned a strictly segregated public realm and eliminated blacks' civil and political rights.[9] In Atlanta, a 1906 race riot accelerated the development of separate spheres for blacks and whites in the city.

---

[8]This context addresses the historic Auburn Avenue black community, encompassing the Site itself and adjacent areas of the Preservation District.

[9]C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, 3d rev. ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), 33, 44, 97; John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss, Jr., *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of Negro Americans*, 6th ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988), 231-37.

The Fifteenth Amendment, ratified in 1870, prohibited the denial of the franchise "by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude."[10] However, when the protection of federal troops was withdrawn, blacks' voting rights increasingly were restricted through intimidation, restrictive legislation, and discriminatory practices. Whites employed numerous devices to disfranchise blacks without openly flouting the Fifteenth Amendment. Southern governments created all-white primaries, poll taxes, literacy tests, and complicated voting procedures to exclude black voters. Many of these measures also limited the franchise of less affluent whites, in spite of mitigating efforts like "grandfather clauses." Grandfather clauses sheltered illiterate whites by exempting from literacy requirements individuals whose ancestors had voted prior to emancipation. By 1910, nearly all southern states had enacted suffrage laws that prevented blacks from voting.[11]

In Atlanta, whites limited black political participation as early as 1872. That year the city's Democratic Party adopted the white primary, excluding blacks from this preliminary selection process.[12] Following the decline of the Republican Party in the South, nomination in a Democratic primary usually assured victory in the general election. Although blacks in Georgia were generally excluded from Democratic primaries, their votes were occasionally sought, and often manipulated, in close contests. In the 1890s, the rise of the Populist Party led to increased competition for southern black votes. Georgia disfranchisement policies wavered as Populist and Democrat candidates vied for urban and rural black votes in 1892, 1894, and 1896. Shortly thereafter, Georgia whites, uncomfortable with black political power, especially in close elections, resumed efforts to effectively disfranchise blacks. This was accomplished in an amendment to the state constitution ratified by referendum in 1908. The primary motivation was to prevent blacks from voting in state and national contests. Even after this date, some blacks were able to vote in Atlanta municipal elections.[13]

---

[10]Richard Bardolph, "Fifteenth Amendment," in *The Encyclopedia of Southern History,* ed. David C. Roller and Robert W. Twyman (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979), 43.

[11]Franklin and Moss, 235-38.

[12]Andy Ambrose, Vincent Fort, Alexa Henderson, Dean Rowley, Carole Stevens, and Barbara Tagger, *Historic Resource Study, Auburn Avenue Community of Atlanta, 1865-1930* (Draft) (Atlanta, n.d.), Part I, 3-5.

[13]Ambrose, et.al., Part I, 3-I - 3-12; John Hope Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of Negro Americans,* 3d ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967), 336-37; Horace C. Wingo, "Race Relations in Georgia, 1872-1908," (Ph.D. diss., University of Georgia, 1969), 72-90.

By 1900, increased efforts to codify segregation practices accompanied disfranchisement measures. The Federal Civil Rights Act of 1875 prohibited segregation on steamboats, railroad cars, hotels, theaters, and other places of entertainment, but it was rarely enforced. In October 1883, the U.S. Supreme Court declared the act's enabling clauses unconstitutional, nullifying its effectiveness. In 1890, the court went further and upheld a Mississippi law mandating "separate but equal" accommodations for black and white railroad passengers. In 1896, the Court in *Plessy v. Ferguson* sanctioned the same principle of racial separation in education. Following these rulings, southern states enacted numerous segregation or "Jim Crow" statutes limiting black and white contact in most public places.[14]

Atlanta's Auburn Avenue reflected the changing nature of southern race relations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As was typical in newer postbellum southern cities, Atlanta blacks were clustered residentially in a number of distinct settlements. Many black neighborhoods were in less desirable low-lying areas or near railroad tracks. However, Atlanta neighborhoods and blocks were less rigidly segregated from 1870 to 1890 than they were after 1900, when Jim Crow was more firmly established. De facto residential segregation existed in the late nineteenth century but was not uniform. After 1900, as Atlanta grew and white hostility increased, the color line became firmly drawn.[15]

Auburn Avenue was opened in 1853 as Wheat Street, named for Augustus M. Wheat, a white merchant. The street runs east from Whitehall Street in downtown Atlanta. The Atlanta City Council renamed the street in April 1893 at the request of residents who thought Auburn Avenue sounded more stylish.[16] Between the 1850s and 1906, Auburn Avenue developed primarily as a white residential and business district that included a substantial black minority.[17] From 1884 to 1900, the racial make-up of the area bounded by Old Wheat Street, Howell, Edgewood, and Jackson

---

[14]Roger A. Fischer, "Segregation," in *The Encyclopedia of Southern History,* 1088-89; C. Van Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1951), 216.

[15]Dana F. White, "The Black Sides of Atlanta: A Geography of Expansion and Containment, 1870-1975," *The Atlanta Historical Journal* 26 (Summer/Fall 1982), 208-9.

[16]Franklin M. Garrett, *Atlanta and Environs: A Chronicle of Its People and Events* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1969), vol. II, 283.

[17]Alexa Henderson and Eugene Walker, *Sweet Auburn: The Thriving Hub of Black Atlanta, 1900-1960* (National Park Service, 1983), 5-10; Ambrose, et al., Part I, 2-4.

(now a portion of the Site) remained substantially constant at approximately 55 percent white and 45 percent black.[18] As one study noted:

> Interestingly enough, the old Fourth Ward, in which the Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site and Preservation District are located, not only had the greatest proportion of blacks in 1896 (46 percent of the ward's population), but the highest degree of integration as well (26 percent [of residences located adjacent to or across from a residence of another race]), a possible indication of the area's appeal to both blacks and whites.[19]

Around 1900, more blacks began to move to the Auburn Avenue neighborhood. This trend accelerated following the bloody September 1906 race riot, during which whites attacked many blacks and black-owned properties in downtown Atlanta and other neighborhoods. A riot relief committee reported that ten blacks and two whites died in the rioting, but contemporary observers put the death toll as high as 100. Black enfranchisement, racial fears, and black economic power were all factors involved in the build-up to the riot. The riot followed a Georgia election for governor in which both candidates, Hoke Smith and Clark Howell, appealed to anti-black sentiment. Both candidates had ties to Atlanta newspapers, which published a series of highly sensationalized accounts of alleged crimes by black males against white women. The month prior to the riot, one thousand delegates to the National Negro Business League convention had met in Atlanta, antagonizing some whites who resented successful blacks.[20]

Subject to increased hostility and rising rents for downtown retail and office space, black businessmen left the central business district and began to concentrate on Auburn Avenue between Courtland and Jackson streets. This area's growing black residential population provided a customer base for these businesses. By 1909, black residences outnumbered white residences along Auburn by 117 to 74, and the section of Auburn Avenue between Courtland Avenue and Jackson Street contained 64 black

---

[18]Ambrose et al., Part I, 2-11; Michael Leroy Porter, "Black Atlanta: An Interdisciplinary Study of Blacks on the East Side of Atlanta, 1890-1930" (Ph.D. diss., Emory University, 1974), 118, 170-73.

[19]Ambrose, et al., Part I, 2-4.

[20]Ambrose, et al., Part I, 1-19 - 1-20, 3-32 - 3-34; Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, 86-87; Wingo, 107-15.

businesses. Once the Auburn Avenue black business area was established, the number of downtown black business concerns declined sharply.[21]

The Auburn Avenue black community emerged because rigid social and physical segregation denied blacks meaningful roles in white-dominated society. In Atlanta and elsewhere in the urban South, blacks developed and strengthened their own churches, businesses, social and cultural institutions, and social welfare agencies.

Between 1910 and 1930, the Auburn Avenue neighborhood became the center of Atlanta black life. Black Masonic leader John Wesley Dobbs tagged the area "Sweet Auburn," because its churches, homes, and commercial buildings were highly visible emblems of black achievement. The Avenue and its vicinity was the site of influential black businesses, churches, and a diverse black residential community. Businesses concentrated on Auburn west of Jackson, and residences lay east. After 1920, industrial concerns that presumably employed blacks, such as laundries and a pencil factory, located on Houston Street. Housing segregation confined blacks to limited areas in Atlanta, and working-class and middle-class blacks often lived side by side in the Auburn Avenue neighborhood.[22]

Small retail businesses, such as barber shops, cleaners and tailors, groceries, drugstores, and restaurants, shared the Avenue with substantial black-owned banks and insurance companies. The Atlanta Life Insurance Company began as a small mutual aid society founded by members of the Wheat Street Baptist Church in 1904. Purchased by black entrepreneur Alonzo Herndon in 1905 and combined by him with other small mutual aid societies, Atlanta Life became one of the largest black-owned proprietary companies in America.[23]

Auburn Avenue exhibited considerable social class and occupational diversity. From 1910 to 1930, many black teachers, clergymen, physicians, and businessmen lived in the community. The most prestigious addresses were on Auburn Avenue and on Houston Street, known as "Bishops Row," because it was home to several Methodist bishops employed at nearby Morris Brown College. Other prominent Auburn Avenue residents were Bishop Lucius H. Holsey of the Methodist Church,

---

[21]Ambrose, et al., Part I, 1-21; White, 212; Porter, 139, 141-148, 151, 157.

[22]Ambrose, et al., Part I, 1-33.

[23]Ambrose, et al., Part II, 1-9 - 1-10. In 1937, black businesses on Auburn Avenue included: Atlanta Life Insurance Co., 148 Auburn; Citizens Trust Company, 212 Auburn; Pioneer Savings Association, 160 Auburn; Afro-American Life Insurance Company, 241 Auburn; the *Atlanta Daily World*, 210 Auburn; Hopkins Book and Furniture Store, 141 Auburn; Aiken, Inc., contractors and builders; Blayton, Adair and Co., accountants; Haugabrooks Funeral Home, 368 Auburn; and The Top Hat Club (later the Royal Peacock), 184-186 Auburn (National Negro Business League, *1937 Directory and Souvenir Program*).

Charles L. Harper, the first principal of Booker T. Washington High School, and the Reverend Peter James Bryant of Wheat Street Baptist Church.[24] Domestic workers, laundresses, carpenters, and laborers also called Auburn Avenue home. Many laborers found employment in the industrial concerns along Houston Street. The neighborhood's housing stock reflected this diversity in employment. Two-story Victorian houses, two-room shotgun cottages, and boarding houses shared Auburn Avenue addresses (photographs 2 and 3).

Black churches were the oldest and most important Auburn Avenue institutions. Baptist and African Methodist Episcopal churches dominated black community life, providing spiritual support to their members and meeting places for many community groups. Numerous social, cultural, and educational institutions and businesses, such as banks and life insurance companies, originated in church benevolent societies. Church leadership conferred great status and autonomy within the black community and often served as a conduit to the white power structure. Ministers led efforts to improve conditions in the community and served on the boards of black colleges, businesses, and social-service institutions.[25] Prominent Auburn Avenue churches included Wheat Street Baptist Church (founded 1870), Bethel AME Church (reorganized in 1865), Butler Street Colored (later Christian) Methodist Episcopal Church (founded 1884), First Congregational Church (founded 1867), and Martin Luther King, Jr.'s church, Ebenezer Baptist Church (founded 1886).[26]

Auburn Avenue boasted an array of organizations devoted to enriching the social, cultural, and social-welfare aspects of black life. These groups included women's clubs, an orphanage and school, social clubs, fraternal orders, libraries, and a YMCA. Large black fraternal orders, like the Odd Fellows, Masons, and Knights of Tabor, added self-help activities to their social and recreational concerns. Members of the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows participated in an insurance benefit program and could borrow money from the order to start businesses and purchase property.[27]

The chief rival to Auburn Avenue as a center of black life was the area surrounding the Atlanta University complex on the city's West Side. The site of several black colleges since the 1870s, the West Side in the 1920s began to attract middle-income blacks in search of new homes. Serious overcrowding in the Auburn Avenue neighborhood contributed to the shift to the West Side. By 1950,

---

[24]Henderson and Walker, 16-17; Ambrose et al., Part I, 2-16 - 2-17, 2-34.

[25]Ambrose, et al., Part II, 2-1 - 2-2.

[26]Ambrose, et al., Part II, 2-1, 2-4, 2-8, 2-10, 2-12, 2-25.

[27]Ambrose, et al., Part I, 4-18 - 4-20.

Photograph 2
Two-story residences on Auburn Avenue with shotgun houses behind

Photograph 3
Two-room double shotgun houses on alley leading from Auburn Avenue

if not earlier, the West Side had replaced Auburn Avenue as the preferred residential address for relatively affluent blacks, but Auburn Avenue continued as a center of black business activity well into the 1950s.[28]

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., IN THE AUBURN AVENUE NEIGHBORHOOD

Martin Luther King, Jr., lived within the Site until he was twelve and within the broader Auburn Avenue community until he was eighteen. The close-knit world of Auburn Avenue, with its emphasis on church and family and its pride in black self-reliance and achievement, profoundly influenced King. Martin Luther King, Jr., was born in a house at 501 Auburn Avenue (Birth Home) on January 15, 1929. The Reverend Adam Daniel Williams (known as A. D.) of Ebenezer Baptist Church, King's maternal grandfather, had purchased the house in 1909. King's father, Martin Luther King, Sr. (Daddy King), moved to the house in 1926, upon his marriage to Alberta Williams (photograph 4). The King family lived on Auburn Avenue until 1941, when they moved three blocks away to 193 Boulevard, near the intersection of Boulevard and Houston Street. This house, built about 1924 and occupied by a black physician, John W. Burney, from 1925 to 1939, is no longer standing and was located outside the Site's boundaries.[29]

In childhood, King observed blacks succeeding within the constraints of a segregated society. Daddy King's ministry gave the family many contacts with black community leaders. Black clergymen, educators, and businessmen often visited Ebenezer Church and the King home. Yet, the community housed a broad range of residents, and King's neighbors employed shovels and brooms as well as pens and cash registers. This environment exposed King to the richness and poverty of black community life.

From an early age, King resented the limitations segregation imposed on blacks, both within and outside his community. King attended Younge Street and David T. Howard elementary schools, both segregated institutions, and commuted on the backs of buses to Atlanta University Lab School and Morehouse College on the West Side of Atlanta. He received discriminatory treatment at downtown stores, movie theaters, and restaurants. One Georgia bus trip fixed the humiliations of segregation in King's mind forever. The driver ordered King and a high school teacher, returning from an

---

[28]Ambrose, et al., Part 1, 2-21 - 2-26; White, 218; C. T. Wright, "The Development of Public Schools for Blacks in Atlanta," *The Atlanta Historical Journal* 26 (Summer/Fall 1982), 115-16.

[29]Taylor Branch, *Parting the Water: America in the King Years, 1954-1963* (New York: Touchstone, 1989), 32, 37, 58; Atlanta City Directories.

Photograph 4
King family, 1939 or 1940: standing, Mrs. Alberta Williams King, Rev. Martin Luther King, Sr., Mrs. Jennie C. Williams; seated, Alfred Daniel Williams King, Christine King, Martin Luther King, Jr.
Courtesy of Mrs. Christine King Farris

oratorical competition, to give up their seats to whites. King later said he was never angrier than on that day.[30]

King also observed the efforts of his father and others to resist the inferior treatment of blacks. In his autobiographical work, *Stride Toward Freedom*, King related how his father forcefully objected when a white policeman called Daddy King a boy. On another occasion, the senior King stormed out of a downtown shoe store when asked to step to the rear of the store. King's father and grandfather both worked to register black voters; A. D. Williams's efforts helped defeat Atlanta school bond issues until they provided for a black high school. Daddy King was an active member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and helped lead efforts to equalize the pay of black and white school teachers, to establish Booker T. Washington High School (Atlanta's first public high school for blacks), and to desegregate elevators in the Atlanta courthouse.[31]

As the son and grandson of prominent Baptist ministers, King knew from personal experience the crucial role of the church in southern black life. Just two blocks west on Auburn Avenue, Ebenezer Baptist Church was a second home to young Martin Luther King, Jr. He spent all day Sunday and much of weekday afternoons and evenings at the church.[32] Prominent black clergymen from as far away as Chicago stayed with the Kings when in Atlanta. King's father was active in his denomination's national organization, the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., serving on its executive board.[33] Ministers had been leaders of the black community from slavery days and would play a leading role in the Civil Rights Movement.

King's background in the black Christian church also helped him to develop a moral basis for opposing segregation. Christian precepts of community, the redemptive power of suffering, and love for enemies provided the basis for King's philosophy of nonviolent resistance to discriminatory laws and customs. King's theological studies at Crozer Seminary and Boston University built on this early exposure to Christian principles at Ebenezer Baptist. Because of his background, King was able to call upon the images and metaphors familiar to millions of southern black

---

[30]Stephen B. Oates, *Let the Trumpet Sound: The Life of Martin Luther King* (New York: Mentor, 1985), 9-10, 14-15.

[31]Malinda King O'Neal, ed., *Ebenezer, A Centennial Time Capsule, 1886-1986* (Atlanta: Ebenezer Baptist Church, n.d.), 3-7; Martin Luther King, Jr., *Stride Toward Freedom* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986), 20; Oates, 6-10: Ambrose, et al., Part II, 9-37.

[32]Oates, 4.

[33]Lewis V. Baldwin, *There is a Balm in Gilead: The Cultural Roots of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 161, 207-8.

churchgoers to rally support for the Civil Rights Movement. Old Testament themes of exile and eventual deliverance had special meaning for southern blacks, who often saw themselves as internal exiles. Black spirituals and gospel songs became mainstays of the Civil Rights Movement.[34]

The experience of growing up on Auburn Avenue firmly rooted Martin Luther King, Jr., in southern black culture. He learned of the diversity, triumphs, and failures of southern blacks. King used this experience to lead blacks in the struggle against segregation. The black church provided a community model that transcended class and status distinctions. King's youthful experience in the Auburn Avenue community helped shape his vision of a just interracial society.

ASSOCIATED PROPERTIES AND PROPERTY TYPES

The Birth Home, Ebenezer Baptist Church, and other Site residences are the properties associated with the context The Development of a Black Community and Leader: Atlanta's Auburn Avenue Neighborhood and Martin Luther King, Jr., 1906-1948. Residences are grouped as a property type because they share functional and associative characteristics. The Birth Home is considered separately because of its unique associations with King's youth, while Ebenezer Baptist Church is the only religious building within the Site associated with this context.

Physical Characteristics

East of Boulevard, the Site remains a residential neighborhood, as it was during King's residence. The basic spatial relationships along the Birth-Home Block (street and sidewalk widths and building setbacks) are unchanged from the 1929-1941 period, although several residences and small store buildings have been demolished. West of Boulevard, the King Center and the Martin Luther King, Jr., Community Center have replaced residences, altering the character of land use surrounding Ebenezer Baptist Church.

The Birth Home, 501 Auburn Avenue, was built ca. 1894 and occupied by whites until sold to the Reverend A. D. Williams, King's maternal grandfather, in 1909. The house is a two-story frame structure with Queen Anne features, including irregular massing, shingled gables, a broad front porch wrapping around part of the west side, scrollwork porch brackets, and a circular window next to the front door (photograph 5). The NPS has restored the interior and exterior of the Birth Home to reflect the period of King's occupancy.

---

[34]Adam Fairclough, *To Redeem the Soul of America: The Southern Christian Leadership Conference and Martin Luther King, Jr.* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1987), 404.

Photograph 5
Martin Luther King, Jr., Birth Home, 501 Auburn Avenue

Ebenezer Baptist Church (407-413 Auburn Avenue) is a three-story red brick and stucco Gothic Revival church constructed from 1914 to 1922 and located at the southeast corner of Auburn Avenue and Jackson Street. To the east of the church is a 1956 education building addition, faced with red brick.

The other Site residences located on Auburn Avenue, Old Wheat Street, Howell Street, Hogue Street, and Boulevard date from circa 1880 to 1933. Two subtypes of residence predominate: single-family houses from 1890-1910 and double shotgun houses from the first decade of the twentieth century. The single family houses are generally two-story frame structures, with Queen Anne or vernacular Victorian detailing. Typical characteristics of these houses include irregular massing, projecting bays, broad front porches carried on columns or posts, contrasting surface areas of shingles and clapboard siding, and decorative millwork. The double shotgun houses are single-story frame structures, often with turned and jigsawn porch decoration. In plan, the shotgun houses are one room wide and two or three rooms deep, with each room opening directly into the room behind. The double shotgun houses consist of two shotgun houses joined by a party wall with separate front entrances for each half of the house. Ornamentation on the double shotgun houses is minimal. One rectangular frame store building, built around 1920, survives at 521-1/2 Auburn.

Chapter 3, Architectural Resources of the Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site, ca. 1880-1950, contains detailed physical descriptions of the Birth Home, Ebenezer Baptist Church, and the other Site residences.

Associative Characteristics

The Birth Home and Ebenezer Baptist Church are closely associated with the formative years of civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr. King was born in an upstairs bedroom of the Birth Home and lived there until he was twelve. King's family was a prominent one in the Auburn Avenue black community, and black ministers, educators, and businessmen were frequent guests in the house. The Birth Home represents the role of King's family and the black community in shaping King's beliefs and character. As the eldest son of Ebenezer's pastor, King spent a great deal of time in the church, at services and other church functions, from his earliest years until he was eighteen. Ebenezer Baptist Church was also an important institution in the largely self-sufficient Auburn Avenue black community. Ebenezer symbolizes the important place of the black church in this community and in King's youth.

The other residences, fire station, sidewalk store building, and landscape features within the Site help to evoke the appearance of the neighborhood where King grew up. These houses formed the physical environment of King's youth. Two houses within the Site were occupied by prominent members of the Auburn Avenue black community. The Reverend Peter J. Bryant, pastor of Wheat Street Baptist Church,

and later, Antoine Graves, a real estate broker, lived at 522 Auburn, and Charles L. Harper, Atlanta's first black high school principal, lived at 535 Auburn. The diversity in size and cost of the extant residences within the Site helps to convey the social class and occupational diversity that characterized the neighborhood during King's youth.

Significance

The Birth Home is nationally significant under Criterion B (persons) as the birthplace and boyhood home of Martin Luther King, Jr., a nationally recognized civil rights leader. King's own autobiographical writings as well as the written and taped recollections of his father and sister document his childhood in this house. King's national significance as an adult civil rights leader is documented below in chapter 2. The Birth Home is also locally significant under Criterion A (events) as a component of the larger Auburn Avenue black community.

Ebenezer Baptist Church is nationally significant under Criterion B (persons) as a place where King spent much of his youth and where his mature beliefs and values began to take shape. Ebenezer Baptist Church is an extremely significant link to Martin Luther King, Jr.'s formative years. At Ebenezer, King learned the Christian doctrines that helped form the basis of his nonviolent opposition to racial discrimination. The Civil Rights Movement relied on themes and images common to the southern black Christian experience. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s exposure to southern black religious culture largely occurred at Ebenezer Baptist Church. King's youthful activities at Ebenezer are well documented in his autobiographical writings and in several biographies of King. Ebenezer is also locally significant under Criterion A (events) as an important institution in the Auburn Avenue community. King's later involvement with Ebenezer Baptist Church as co-pastor from 1960 to 1968 and the church's role as a site for numerous Civil Rights Movement conferences, meetings, and strategy sessions enhance the national significance of this resource under Criterion A (see chapter 2 below).

Other residences within the Site, Fire Station Number Six, and landscape features such as historic sidewalks are contributing resources under Criteria A (events) and B (persons), because they represent the environment in which King grew up. The largely self-contained Auburn Avenue black neighborhood helped form King's character and influenced King's future development as a civil rights leader. The extant Site residences are physical links to the community that existed from 1929 to 1941.

The eligibility of these resources under Criterion C (design/construction) is considered below in chapter 3.

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS/INTEGRITY

In general, birthplaces are eligible for National Register listing if the person is of outstanding historical importance and other appropriate sites connected with the individual's productive life are not available. For Martin Luther King, Jr., Congress specifically authorized the protection and interpretation of King's birthplace as part of the Site. King is unquestionably of national historical importance as a civil rights leader.

The NPS has restored the interior and exterior of the Birth Home to represent its appearance during King's years of residence. The Birth Home possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The essential physical features that defined the appearance of the house in 1929-1941 are intact.

Church properties usually are eligible for National Register listing only if their significance derives primarily from architectural or historical importance, independent of the property's religious function. Ebenezer Baptist Church has historical importance in relationship to this context both as an institution of great importance to the Auburn Avenue black community and as a place where Martin Luther King, Jr., spent much of his youth. King became historically important as a national civil rights leader, not as a pastor. The influences that shaped King's career as a civil rights leader are represented in Ebenezer Baptist Church.

Ebenezer Baptist Church possesses a high degree of integrity. The exterior and interior are substantially as they were from 1929 to 1941. Exterior materials, window and door openings, decorative brick work, and stained glass windows are unchanged. The addition of an education building in 1956 and a minor 1971 addition to the south facade of the church are changes with minor visual impact. The education building has significance under the Civil Rights Movement context as the site of important events connected with the Civil Rights Movement (see chapter 2). Ebenezer Baptist is in current use as a church and is instantly recognizable as such. It possesses integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and setting. It also retains considerable integrity of setting, although surrounding land use has changed somewhat from residential to institutional (King Center and community center).

To qualify as contributing resources, Site residences must have been present during the period (1929-1941) that Martin Luther King, Jr., lived within the Site. Residences on the Birth Block or near enough to it to have been an important part of King's youthful environment are evaluated under this context. Because residences are primarily significant under this context for associative characteristics rather than for design, a considerable degree of alteration or deterioration may be present without defeating eligibility. Much of the housing stock within the Site has deteriorated since 1941, detracting from the integrity of design and workmanship in some cases. Some

single-family houses have been converted to multiple occupancy; nonhistoric exterior treatments, such as asphalt siding, have been applied to some structures; and some original architectural details have been removed or replaced. To be eligible as a contributing resource, enough original fabric should remain to permit a residence, after exterior rehabilitation, to adequately represent the appearance of the neighborhood in the 1929-1941 period.

Some residences within the Site are not eligible as contributing resources under this context because they lack integrity. More than 75 percent of the original fabric of 492-494 Auburn had to be replaced, making this structure a reconstruction and therefore ineligible. 18 Howell, which has suffered years of structural and architectural deterioration and a fire, does not retain sufficient integrity to qualify as a contributing resource. In addition, 479-481 Old Wheat Street, through various alterations over the years, has lost most of its distinctive architectural decorative features such as the porch millwork. It also has a concrete porch and has been converted to a single-family residence.

Eligible Properties

Nationally Significant

Ebenezer Baptist Church, 407-413 Auburn Avenue (1914-1922)
Birth Home, 501 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1894)

Contributing to the Site's National Significance

472-474 Auburn Avenue (1905)
476-478 Auburn Avenue (1905)
480-482 Auburn Avenue (1905)
484-486 Auburn Avenue (1905)
488-490 Auburn Avenue (1905)
491-493 Auburn Avenue (1911)
493 Auburn Avenue, Rear, units 1-6 (1911)
497 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1900) and back yard shed/garage (ca. 1933-1935)
503 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1895) and granite front yard steps (ca. 1895-1915)
506 Auburn Avenue (1933)
510 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1890)
514 Auburn Avenue (1893)
515 Auburn Avenue (1909)
518 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1893) and front walk (ca. 1895-1915)
521 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1886) and front walk (ca. 1890-1915)

521-1/2 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1920)
522 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1894)
526 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1895)
530 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1895) and iron fence (ca. 1895-1915)
535 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1895)
540 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1890)
546 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1890)
550 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1890)
Fire Station Number Six, 37-39 Boulevard (1894)
53-55 Boulevard (1905)
483-485 Old Wheat Street (1905)
487-489 Old Wheat Street (1905)
53 Hogue Street (ca. 1940)
14 Howell Street (ca. 1927)
24 Howell Street (ca. 1895)
28 Howell Street (ca. 1895)
54 Howell Street (ca. 1931)
Alley running south from Auburn between 493 and 497 Auburn (ca. 1911)
Pea-gravel sidewalk on north side of Auburn between Boulevard and Howell Street (ca. 1922-1923)
Brick sidewalk on north side of Auburn east of Howell Street (ca. 1890-1920)
Brick sidewalk on west side of Howell Street north of Auburn Avenue (ca. 1895-1922)

NONELIGIBLE PROPERTIES

492-494 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1897), a reconstruction managed as a cultural resource
18 Howell Street (1927)
479-481 Old Wheat Street (1905)

CHAPTER 2

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.'S LEADERSHIP OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT, 1955-1968

This chapter briefly reviews the origins of the American Civil Rights Movement and provides an overview of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s career as a civil rights leader. The Civil Rights Movement encompassed many desegregation demonstrations and campaigns in diverse locations across the American South. Dr. King participated in many of these campaigns, while residing in Montgomery, Alabama (1954 to 1960), and Atlanta (1960-1968). Atlanta was also the headquarters of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, an important civil rights organization headed by King from 1957 to 1968. The period of significance begins in 1955, when King became the leader of a movement to boycott segregated buses in Montgomery, Alabama, and ends in 1968, the year of King's death.[35]

American Civil Rights Movement

Although the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), founded in 1909, had worked for decades to secure black civil rights, several factors infused black civil rights campaigns with new vigor and made national politicians more receptive to black demands following 1945. The experience of blacks in World War II, the increasing political power of blacks in northern cities, the willingness of some black ministers to more aggressively attack segregation, and the role of a new

---

[35]A more detailed account of King's civil rights activities can be found in *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954-1963* by Taylor Branch, *To Redeem the Soul of America: The Southern Christian Leadership Conference and Martin Luther King, Jr.* by Adam Fairclough, *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference* by David J. Garrow, and *Let the Trumpet Sound: The Life of Martin Luther King, Jr.* by Stephen B. Oates.

communications medium—television—in exposing Americans to the plight of blacks in the segregated South all influenced the postwar racial climate.[36]

As the United States slowly emerged from the Great Depression and prepared for the possibility of war, black leaders lobbied for equitable treatment of blacks in the military and defense industries. In January 1941, A. Philip Randolph, President of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, an important black labor union, pressured the Roosevelt Administration to increase black employment in defense industries. Randolph began preparations for a mass protest march in Washington, D.C., with fifty to one hundred thousand black participants. President Franklin D. Roosevelt avoided the march by issuing Executive Order 8802 on June 25, 1941, banning employment discrimination by defense contractors. Approximately one million blacks served in the armed forces during World War II in segregated units, usually with white officers. But these men enjoyed greater opportunities to train as officers, pilots, and engineers than during previous conflicts. Black veterans returned from the war with broader horizons and enhanced self-confidence to press for full civil rights and an end to segregation.[37]

Legal racial segregation in public places continued after World War II throughout the South, where 70 percent of American blacks lived. In 1944, only 5 percent of black adults in the South were registered voters. The NAACP, led by blacks, spearheaded intensified challenges to segregation and disfranchisement and remained the dominant civil rights organization during the 1940s and 1950s.[38] While the NAACP concentrated on legal challenges through the courts, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), an interracial group founded in 1942, experimented with nonviolent sit-ins to protest discriminatory hiring practices at Chicago department stores. CORE, however, never gained a large following among blacks.[39]

The postwar federal courts and Democratic administrations were increasingly sympathetic to black concerns. The Democratic Party was becoming more dependent on black voters in northern cities and included in its ranks outspoken civil rights advocates like former first lady Eleanor Roosevelt and Minneapolis Mayor Hubert Humphrey. In 1944, the U.S. Supreme Court banned the all-white primary election,

---

[36]Sean Dennis Cashman, *African-Americans and the Quest for Civil Rights, 1900-1990* (New York: New York University Press, 1991), 89.

[37]Franklin, 573-78, 608.

[38]Franklin and Moss, 411; Homer C. Hawkins, "Negro Migration," in *The Encyclopedia of Southern History*, 892.

[39]Oates, 13-14; Fairclough, 2, 31; Franklin, 446-47, 608.

a device commonly employed in the one-party, Democratic South to exclude blacks from the political process. In 1946, President Harry S Truman appointed a biracial presidential commission that released a report, *To Secure These Rights*, which called for the elimination of segregation. The President issued an executive order in July 1948 desegregating the armed forces. A civil rights platform plank endorsed at the 1948 Democratic National Convention led to a walk-out by many Southern delegates and the creation of a third-party presidential ticket that carried four southern states. Also in 1948, the U.S. Supreme Court declared racially restrictive covenants in residential real estate transfers legally unenforceable. The covenants were widely used to prevent the sale of houses to nonwhites. In 1950, the Supreme Court ruled segregation on interstate railroad dining facilities unconstitutional.[40]

In the early 1950s, blacks were gaining political influence in parts of the South. By 1952, 20 percent of eligible southern blacks were registered voters, a fourfold increase over 1944. Blacks were elected to city councils in Winston-Salem (1947) and Greensboro, North Carolina (1951). Most registration gains came in the Upper South rather than in the Deep-South states, where entrenched legal hurdles, culturally sanctioned intimidation, and violence effectively crippled enfranchisement attempts.[41]

The most important legal defeat for segregation occurred in May 1954 when the U.S. Supreme Court unanimously ruled segregated public schools unconstitutional in *Brown v. Board of Education*—a group of consolidated cases the NAACP had been pursuing for years. The *Brown* decision greatly encouraged civil rights activists to expand their attacks on other aspects of segregation. It also intensified southern white resistance to integration.[42]

Local desegregation campaigns launched the American Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s. In Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Montgomery, Alabama; and Tallahassee, Florida, blacks challenged segregation on city buses. Leadership of the bus boycotts quickly passed from teachers and other professionals to black clergymen. Black ministers, supported financially by their congregations, were less vulnerable to white economic reprisals. Churches also possessed unmatched prestige in the black community and controlled organizational assets. Church auditoriums and classrooms provided space for meetings, and mimeograph machines spread the message for mass actions.[43]

---

[40]Branch, 13; Franklin and Moss, 413; Fairclough, 15.

[41]Fairclough, 15.

[42]Branch, 112; Fairclough, 21.

[43]Fairclough, 14, 17-18.

During the Civil Rights Movement, blacks relied less on traditional legal challenges to segregation and more on direct-action protests, often involving hundreds or thousands of demonstrators. Southern blacks in the 1960s protested with boycotts, sit-ins, and marches, risking arrest and beatings from white law-enforcement officers. The press carried news of any violent response by white authorities to a national audience. The new medium of television cast a particularly harsh light on the repressive tactics of southern officials and spurred reform efforts nationally. Civil rights leaders always hoped to extract concessions from local governments, but federal legislation, which tended to be more progressive and broad-based and more likely to be enforced, was usually more effective in accomplishing change. Civil rights campaigns in the 1960s aimed to influence national opinion as much as secure local concessions.

CIVIL RIGHTS LEADERSHIP OF MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

In 1954, the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama, hired Martin Luther King, Jr., as its pastor. Following his graduation from Crozer Seminary in 1951, King had worked toward a doctorate in comparative theology at Boston University. While in Boston, he met Alabama-born Coretta Scott, a music student at the New England Conservatory. The two were married on June 18, 1953. Upon assuming his pastorate in Montgomery, King rapidly established his authority and expanded the church's existing social welfare program. He formed a social and political action committee, a committee to raise scholarship funds for black college students, and a cultural committee to encourage black artists. King joined the local chapter of the NAACP and the Alabama Council on Human Relations, one of the few interracial groups in the state. Within a year, King was known in the Montgomery black community as an activist and leader. NAACP members elected him to the Montgomery Chapter's Executive Board, and he served as vice president of the Montgomery Chapter of the Alabama Council on Human Relations.[44] In December 1955, Montgomery blacks chose King to lead their protest against segregated buses, beginning his career as a civil rights leader.

Montgomery blacks had long resented city ordinances that required segregation on buses and state laws that authorized drivers to enforce the ordinances. Throughout 1955, E. D. Nixon, a Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters official, and Fred Gray, one of Alabama's few black attorneys, sought a strong test case to challenge the laws. On December 1, 1955, Montgomery police arrested Rosa Parks for refusing to surrender her bus seat to a white, providing just such a case. Mrs. Parks, a respected seamstress

---

[44]Martin Luther King, Jr., 25-32; Oates, 35-45.

and secretary of the Montgomery NAACP chapter, was of unimpeachable character and likely to make an excellent trial witness. Authorities charged Mrs. Parks only with violation of the segregation laws. Because no disorderly conduct charges were involved, the lawyers could mount a direct attack on the segregation laws. Mrs. Parks agreed to appeal her conviction, thrusting her case into a national spotlight.[45]

E. D. Nixon and teachers from black Alabama State College organized a bus boycott to complement the legal challenge. On December 4, 1955, the first day of the boycott, Montgomery black leaders met to plan an evening mass meeting. In attendance were Nixon, Rufus Lewis, a funeral director and Nixon's rival for leadership of the black community, and a number of ministers including King and Ralph David Abernathy, pastor of First Baptist Church. The group created the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA) to coordinate the boycott and negotiate with the bus company. Lewis made a motion to name King president of the association, and he was elected without opposition.[46] In leading the MIA, King insisted on nonviolent protest, based on the principles of civil disobedience—many articulated by Henry David Thoreau and Mohandas Gandhi. Participants in the boycott were instructed on how to respond nonviolently to verbal and physical attacks. The Montgomery black community successfully maintained the boycott for over one year. In November 1956, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned the Alabama and Montgomery bus segregation laws.[47]

King's boycott leadership propelled him to national prominence as a civil rights leader. From 1955 until his assassination in 1968, King led or provided strong support to numerous campaigns and demonstrations for equal rights throughout the South. Many of these efforts were coordinated by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), an activist organization of Southern black clergymen King helped establish in 1957.[48]

The SCLC evolved from informal meetings and strategy sessions held by Southern black ministers concerning the Montgomery boycott. Ministers who attended the meetings included King, the Reverend C. K. Steele, who had helped lead the Tallahassee bus boycott, and the Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth of Birmingham, Alabama, who had founded the Alabama Christian Movement when the state

---

[45]Branch, 120-22, 128-31; David J. Garrow, *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference* (New York: Morrow, 1986), 11-14.

[46]Branch, 131-37.

[47]Branch, 193.

[48]Oates, 119.

effectively shut down the Alabama chapter of the NAACP. In December 1956, at Holt Street Baptist Church in Montgomery, King, Shuttlesworth, Steele, the Reverend Theodore Jemison of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, the Reverend Joseph E. Lowery of Mobile, Alabama, J. H. Jackson, president of the National Baptist Convention, and others held a week-long "Institute on Nonviolent Social Change."[49]

Encouraged by the interaction at these meetings and in response to suggestions from Bayard Rustin, a veteran pacifist organizer from New York, King, Shuttlesworth, and Steele issued invitations for an organizational meeting of the "Southern Negro Leaders Conference on Transportation and Nonviolent Integration" held at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta on January 10 and 11, 1957. Approximately sixty southern black ministers attended the organizational meeting, and, at a subsequent meeting in February, King was elected president. In August 1957 the group changed its name to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.[50]

Overshadowing other groups such as CORE and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the SCLC became "the sustaining mechanism of the Civil Rights Movement."[51] The SCLC sought to coordinate and raise funds, mostly from Northern sources, for local civil rights protests across the south and to develop and train black leaders. Emphasizing its roots in the church, the SCLC insisted on a commitment to nonviolence in all its endeavors. The SCLC was a loosely structured organization, with a fluctuating contingent of headquarters staff and field organizers. Black Baptist ministers dominated the organization's governing board and executive staff. To avoid direct competition with the NAACP, the SCLC did not accept individual memberships, but worked through local, dues-paying affiliates, most of which were black church groups.[52] Locally anchored, independently financed, and committed to a program of nonviolence, the SCLC proved effective after some initial faltering.

Martin Luther King, Jr., was the dominant personality within the SCLC. His national prestige, moving oratory, and experience with both southern black culture and northern intellectual circles made a uniquely successful combination. King moved easily between a rally at a rural black Baptist church in Alabama and a fund-raising

---

[49]Garrow, 81; Fairclough, 23.

[50]Fairclough, 29-32; Branch, 198-99; Garrow, 81-85, 90, 97.

[51]Fairclough, 2.

[52]Fairclough, 2-7.

dinner in New York City. Many staff and board members contributed to the SCLC's success, but during King's life, the SCLC was synonymous with him.[53]

The SCLC initially concentrated on local voter registration drives in the South, without significant success. Understaffed, chronically short of funds, and without a clear strategic direction, the SCLC achieved little in its first two years. In 1959, the group's executive board urgently requested that King "seriously consider giving the maximum of his time and energies" to the organization's work.[54] In response to this plea, King resigned his pastorate at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in 1960 and moved permanently to Atlanta. The King family—Martin, Coretta, and their two children, Yolanda and Martin Luther King III—moved into a small rented house on Johnson Avenue in Atlanta, near Ebenezer Baptist, but outside the current boundaries of the national historic site. The Kings later purchased a larger house on the city's west side, where King resided at the time of his death. While in Atlanta, the Kings had two more children, Dexter and Bernice. From 1960 to 1968, King devoted most of his energies to the SCLC and co-pastored with his father at Ebenezer Baptist Church, traveling much of the time (photograph 6).[55]

With King firmly in command, the SCLC figured prominently in many of the important civil rights campaigns of the 1960s. Local groups frequently called on King and the SCLC for counsel. In February 1960, college students from North Carolina Agricultural & Technical College staged sit-in protests at a whites-only Woolworth's lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina. Within six weeks, the sit-ins spread to dozens of cities across the South. In April, two hundred black college students met at Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina, to form the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). The SCLC helped underwrite the meetings, which King attended as an advisor and speaker. The SNCC avoided a formal alliance with the SCLC, but established its headquarters in Atlanta and officially recognized King as a permanent advisor.[56]

Following King's move to Atlanta, student leaders repeatedly urged him to join their efforts to desegregate local restaurants and stores. In October 1960, King participated in a desegregation protest at Rich's Department Store in downtown Atlanta. Atlanta police arrested King and thirty-five others on trespassing charges for

---

[53]Fairclough, 5, 38.

[54]Garrow, 102-04, 121.

[55]Garrow, 122-23; Oates, 64, 125, 198, 215-16.

[56]Branch, 271-72; Garrow, 131-34.

Ebenezer Baptist Church

407 Auburn Avenue, N. E.
Atlanta 12, Georgia
Church Phone MUrray 8-7263

"Hitherto hath the Lord helped us"

Ministers:
MARTIN LUTHER KING, SR.
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Photograph 6
Program, Ebenezer Baptist Church, June 13, 1965
Courtesy of Ebenezer Baptist Church

refusing to leave the store's whites-only restaurant. Following this arrest, Georgia Judge J. Oscar Mitchell revoked King's probation on an existing charge of driving without a valid driver's license and sentenced him to four months at hard labor. Democratic presidential candidate John F. Kennedy telephoned King's wife Coretta to express his concern, also hoping to draw support from black voters. Kennedy's brother and campaign manager, Robert Kennedy, called Judge Mitchell, who then released King on bond. Upon his release, King addressed a rally at Ebenezer Baptist Church. He expressed his gratitude and esteem for Senator Kennedy, and Daddy King openly endorsed Kennedy's candidacy.[57] Although King made no formal endorsement, the Kennedy campaign publicized the two telephone calls to the black community nationwide, and Kennedy received 70 percent of the black vote in the November election.[58]

In May 1961, CORE began a series of Freedom Rides, attempting to enforce the desegregation of southern bus terminals ordered by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1960. At every southern bus stop, the riders attempted to use the whites-only facilities and to receive service at lunch counters. After a group of riders was brutally beaten by mobs in Alabama, King on May 20 addressed a rally in Montgomery, vowing to support a nonviolent campaign against the entire system of segregation in Alabama. A few days later, King presided at a meeting at Ebenezer Baptist Church where representatives of the SCLC, CORE, SNCC, and others formed the temporary Freedom Ride Coordinating Committee to coordinate support for the Freedom Riders. In late May, Attorney General Robert Kennedy ordered the Interstate Commerce Commission to draft regulations outlawing segregation in interstate bus facilities.[59]

In the summer of 1961, SNCC began organizing segregation protests in the southwest Georgia city of Albany, forming a coalition called the Albany Movement. In December 1961, with hundreds of protesters in jail and no money for lawyers, the Albany Movement requested King's help. Throughout the first half of 1962, protests coordinated by the SCLC, SNCC, and the local chapter of the NAACP continued in Albany. King participated in several demonstrations and spent time in jail. Albany's white leadership ordered mass arrests, which were accomplished without violence. Lacking brutal local opposition that aroused press interest and racked by internal divisions, the Albany Movement failed to gain any concessions on desegregation. The Albany experience was valuable. In subsequent campaigns, King and the SCLC

---

[57]Oates, 159; Garrow, 138-49.

[58]Branch, 351-78.

[59]Branch, 477; Oates, 168-71; Garrow, 154-61.

attempted to operate where the black community was unified and where violent white response was likely to attract national attention.[60]

The Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights (ACMR), an affiliate of SCLC in Birmingham, began an effort to desegregate downtown stores in 1962. Blacks organized a boycott of stores to force negotiations. In December 1962, ACMR leader Fred Shuttlesworth persuaded King and the SCLC to agree to organize and lead a mass action campaign in Birmingham. During mass protest marches, Birmingham Police Commissioner Eugene "Bull" Connor unleashed fire hoses and police dogs on the youthful marchers. These tactics elicited widespread negative reaction when shown on national television. In May 1963, the city's white merchants agreed to desegregate fitting rooms, restrooms, and lunch counters and promised to improve black employment opportunities in stores.[61]

Capitalizing on the success of the Birmingham campaign, the SCLC joined forces with A. Philip Randolph, the NAACP, and other groups to organize a massive March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom on August 28, 1963. An immediate goal of the march was the passage of a civil rights bill that the Kennedy Administration had sent to Congress. Broader goals encompassed the elimination of all legal segregation and increased job opportunities for blacks. Labor leaders like United Auto Workers President Walter Reuther and prominent white religious leaders supported the effort. The march drew two hundred thousand participants and brought national attention to the civil rights struggle. The demonstration concluded with a rally in front of the Lincoln Memorial, where King delivered his "I Have a Dream" address, an impassioned plea for racial justice.[62]

President Kennedy's civil rights bill was stalled in Congress when he was assassinated in November 1963. Kennedy's successor, President Lyndon B. Johnson, strengthened the bill's provisions and engineered its passage in the summer of 1964. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibited racial discrimination in most public accommodations, banned employment discrimination, created the Equal Opportunity Commission, and denied federal funds to any activity where discrimination was practiced. King attended the bill's signing ceremonies in Washington in July 1964.[63]

---

[60]Garrow, 173-80, 216-17.

[61]Garrow, 199, 229, 259-64.

[62]Garrow, 266, 278, 281-84.

[63]Garrow, 337; Ruth Cowart Wright, "Civil Rights Act of 1964," in *The Encyclopedia of Southern History*, 218-19.

During the late 1950s and early 1960s, King's international reputation grew. The NAACP bestowed it highest award, the Spingarn Medal, on King in 1957. By 1964, he had published *Stride Toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story* (1958) and *Strength to Love* (1963), a book of sermons. In January 1964, *Time* magazine named him its "Man of the Year" for 1963. In December 1964, King traveled to Norway to accept the Nobel Peace Prize, awarded for his nonviolent civil rights work.[64]

King's growing international stature did not preclude his involvement with local issues. In late 1964, King and SCLC participated in an Atlanta labor dispute that affected blacks living on the East Side. At issue was alleged racial discrimination by Scripto, Inc., a manufacturer of pencils, pens, and cigarette lighters. Founded in Atlanta in 1923, Scripto in 1931 built a manufacturing plant at 423 Houston Street, within the current Site boundaries. From the 1930s to the 1960s, Scripto expanded its operations, adding plant buildings between Houston and Irwin and constructing offices and research facilities at 150 and 160 Boulevard. By 1964, Scripto employed 950 workers. Some 633 of Scripto's 836 production and maintenance workers were black women. Many were residents of nearby residential areas.[65]

On November 27, 1964, Local 754 of the International Chemical Workers Union called a strike, alleging that Scripto's offer of a 4 percent raise to skilled workers and a 2 percent raise to unskilled workers was discriminatory. The union considered the offer unfair, because it believed Scripto refused to promote blacks to skilled positions. Only six of Scripto's 700 black employees were categorized as skilled workers. On November 30, Dr. King informed Scripto that the SCLC supported the strikers and threatened to lead a nationwide boycott of Scripto products if the strike remained unsettled.[66] The company countered that the issues were entirely economic, not racial. King was scheduled to address a rally of strikers at Mt. Zion Second Baptist Church on December 1, but flew to Washington to meet with FBI Director J. Edgar

---

[64]Garrow, 364-65, 728; Oates, 143-44, 271.

[65]Tom Greene, "Negro Chiefs Back Strike at Scripto," *Atlanta Journal*, Nov. 30, 1964; James Walker, "SCLC Joins in Scripto Walkout," *Atlanta Journal*, Dec. 2, 1964; "Scripto, Union to Talk Anew," *Atlanta Daily World*, Dec. 13, 1964; Paul Troop and Ann Woolner, "Scripto Moves Plant to Suburbs," *Atlanta Journal*, Dec. 20, 1977; Atlanta building permit files at Atlanta Historical Society.

[66]Dr. King was away from Atlanta for two weeks during the early part of the strike. King left Atlanta December 4 to receive the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo, Norway, stopping in London on the way, and in New York and Washington, D.C., on his return trip (Oates, 310-13).

Hoover instead. The Reverend C. T. Vivian of SCLC substituted for King at the rally.[67]

A day after his return to Atlanta from the Nobel ceremonies in Oslo, King walked the picket line at Scripto for 30 minutes on December 19, 1964.[68] According to newspaper accounts, King walked the line with 15 others, including a representative from the union's international headquarters in Amsterdam. On Sunday, December 20, King addressed a rally attended by 250 striking Scripto employees at Ebenezer Baptist Church. King announced that the SCLC was proceeding with plans to implement a boycott of Scripto products. On December 24, union leaders and SCLC abandoned the boycott when Scripto agreed to pay Christmas bonuses to all employees. An agreement in principle between Scripto and the union appears to have been reached at this point, and newspaper accounts do not mention any strike-related activity by SCLC or King after December 24. Scripto and the union officially announced a strike settlement on January 9, 1965. The basis of the settlement was an across-the-board wage increase to all categories of employees. The Scripto plant remained in operation on Houston Street until December 1977, when operations moved to Gwinnett County.[69]

While the Scripto strike unfolded, King was planning a major civil rights campaign for Alabama. Throughout 1964, the SCLC and SNCC had been working independently to register voters in various Alabama counties. A coalition including the SCLC and SNCC concentrated its 1965 efforts in Selma, Alabama, where segregationist Dallas County Sheriff Jim Clark led the resistance. Large-scale demonstrations and mass arrests in Selma began in January and continued into March.

---

[67]Walker; Greene; Troop and Woolner; "'Breadbasket' Asks Boycott of Scripto," *Atlanta Journal*, Dec. 10, 1964; "King Addresses Group Today on Current Strike," *Atlanta Daily World*, Dec. 1, 1964; "Strikers Meet Tuesday; Hear Pledge of Support," *Atlanta Daily World*, Dec. 2, 1964; Remer Tyson, "Union's Bias Charge False, Scripto Says," *Atlanta Constitution*, Dec. 23, 1964.

[68]Research to date has not indicated exactly where King walked the picket line on December 19. Newspaper accounts from other days, when King was not picketing, indicate that the area around Boulevard and Irwin was the focus of picketing. A large parking lot for Scripto employees was located on the north side of Irwin and would have been a logical site for pickets seeking to keep workers from breaking the strike. One article indicates that on some days, all buildings of the Scripto complex were picketed (Walker; "Scripto, Union Meeting Today," *Atlanta Daily World*, Dec. 3, 1964; "Bargaining Session to Be Held by Scripto and Union," *Atlanta Daily World*, Dec. 20, 1964).

[69]Walker; Greene; Troop and Woolner; Tyson; "'Breadbasket' Asks Boycott of Scripto," *Atlanta Journal*, Dec. 10, 1964; "King Pickets Scripto Plant 30 Minutes," *Atlanta Journal*, Dec. 20, 1964; G. S. Carlson, "Must Fight for Better Jobs, King Tells 250 Scripto Strikers," *Atlanta Constitution*, Dec. 21, 1964; "Christmas Bonus Paid, Strikers Suspend Boycott of Scripto," *Atlanta Daily World*, Dec. 25, 1964; "Scripto Gives 900 Pay Hike," *Atlanta Journal*, Jan. 20, 1965.

King and other leaders planned a march from Selma to Montgomery for March 7, 1965, designed to draw attention to the refusal to register black voters. When the marchers reached the Edmund Pettus Bridge on the east side of Selma, state troopers and "possemen," deputized by Sheriff Clark, charged into the demonstrators, beating them with billy clubs and firing tear gas. Graphic national television coverage of the incident sparked widespread outrage.[70]

The repression of the Selma march brought growing numbers of supportive northern white clergymen and labor leaders to the city and increased pressure on President Lyndon B. Johnson and Congress to protect voting rights. On Monday evening, March 15, President Johnson appeared before Congress and a national television audience to introduce legislation that would send federal agents to the South to oversee voter registration. Protected by federalized National Guard troops and a court order, King led a march from Selma to Montgomery March 21 through March 25, which ended with a rally on the steps of the Alabama state capitol. The voting rights legislation was enacted in early August, with King attending signing ceremonies at the Capitol in Washington.[71]

Following the successful voting rights bill campaign, King and the SCLC increasingly turned their attention to the broader problems of poverty and unemployment, particularly in northern city slums. The SCLC continued its voter registration and leadership training work in the South but also mounted a major effort in Chicago in 1965-66. The SCLC joined a coalition of local groups called the Coordinating Council of Community Organizations to attack housing and employment discrimination, inferior public schools, and exploitive ghetto merchants. King moved to a Chicago slum apartment on a part-time basis to draw attention to ghetto conditions. King, SCLC staff, and local leaders led open-housing marches into all-white neighborhoods, frequently encountering hostile crowds. Confronting complex social and economic forces rather than legal segregation, the Chicago campaign had difficulty defining coherent goals. Movement leaders negotiated an agreement with city officials and real estate professionals on a limited number of housing issues, but implementation of the accord was slow. The narrow scope and vague wording of the agreement drew criticism from some commentators and civil rights leaders outside of the SCLC.[72]

---

[70]King did not participate in the March 7 demonstration, but two days later he led 2,000 marchers to the Pettus Bridge, where a confrontation was avoided by King's decision not to move beyond the bridge (Garrow, 371-404).

[71]Garrow, 405-12; Oates, 359-60.

[72]Garrow, 456-59, 489-503, 527-30.

Increasingly in the last two years of his life, King moved beyond attacks on segregation to focus on broader issues of economic justice and U.S. military involvement in Vietnam. In April 1966, the SCLC board approved a resolution condemning U.S. policy in Vietnam and urging serious consideration of a prompt withdrawal of forces.[73] King continued to speak out against the war in 1967 and 1968. In the fall of 1967, King and the SCLC began planning a "Poor People's Campaign" to dramatize the issue of poverty in America. For the first time, the SCLC attempted to create a national movement, rather than joining a preexisting local movement. The SCLC hoped to bring together blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans, and poor whites in the campaign. The SCLC's plans called for three caravans of the poor to march on Washington, D.C., from Mississippi, Milwaukee, and Boston in the spring of 1968. Once in Washington, the demonstrators would establish a temporary tent city to keep the problems of the poor before Congress and the nation. The SCLC hoped to influence Congress to pass legislation assuring full employment, a guaranteed annual income, and increased funding for public housing. King contemplated disrupting traffic and city services if orderly marches and demonstrations failed to move Congress.[74]

King's willingness to consider more aggressive forms of nonviolent protest reflected a growing controversy among blacks over the continued viability of the philosophy of nonviolence. As early as 1966, SNCC's Stokely Carmichael began to articulate a "Black Power" stance that emphasized gaining power for blacks by any means necessary. Frustrated by the slow progress of civil rights reforms and the perceived passivity of King's nonviolent approach in the face of white violence against blacks, many younger blacks embraced Black Power in the late 1960s. By 1968, leaders like Carmichael and H. Rap Brown openly scorned nonviolence and challenged King's leadership of the Civil Rights Movement. Adding to the national controversy over nonviolence were the riots in urban black ghettos that began in the Watts section of Los Angeles in the summer of 1965 and continued in Chicago in 1966, Detroit and Newark in 1967, and dozens of other cities. Increasingly in 1967 and 1968, King was attempting to guide a movement deeply divided over philosophy and tactics.[75]

In early 1968, King was devoting much of his time to recruiting for the Poor People's Campaign, when the Reverend James Lawson of Memphis, Tennessee, asked him to support a strike of black sanitation workers in that city. The sanitation

---

[73]Garrow, 469-70.

[74]Garrow, 579-600; Fairclough, 357-59.

[75]Garrow, 439, 481, 573; Oates, 366-68, 387, 394-95, 401-9, 429, 453.

workers had walked out in February 1968, because city officials refused to recognize their nearly all-black local of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees. The Community on the Move for Equality (COME) organization was formed to support the strikers. King was largely unaware of divisions within the Memphis black community between established clergy and NAACP officials and young Black Power adherents. On March 18, King addressed a rally of fifteen thousand strikers and supporters in Memphis. Ten days later, King led a march that turned violent. A small minority of demonstrators began looting, and police attacked both looters and peaceful demonstrators. Deeply alarmed by the eruption of violence, King vowed to return to Memphis and conduct a wholly peaceful march to vindicate his nonviolent beliefs.[76]

King arrived in Memphis on Wednesday, April 3, 1968, for talks with participants in a new march scheduled for Monday, April 8. Aides described King as depressed as a result of the violence that marked the previous march and the difficulties the SCLC was experiencing recruiting for the Poor People's Campaign. On Wednesday evening King addressed a small rally at the Memphis Mason Temple. The next evening, April 4, 1968, King was assassinated while standing on the balcony of his room at the Lorraine Motel. Blacks and whites alike reacted with sorrow and anger to King's murder. Rioting in 110 American cities left thirty-nine dead in the days following King's death.[77] Escaped convict James Earl Ray was tried and convicted of murdering King, although the question of whether Ray acted alone is still debated. The Reverend Ralph D. Abernathy succeeded King as president of the SCLC. Abernathy went ahead with the Poor People's Campaign in Washington, but failed to accomplish the campaign's goals.[78]

King's body was flown to Atlanta, where it lay in state at Sisters Chapel of Spelman College. On April 9, 1968, Ralph Abernathy, who had been with King since the Montgomery bus boycott days, conducted his funeral service at Ebenezer Baptist Church. Prominent civil rights leaders, black entertainers and professional athletes, and the four leading presidential contenders—Senator Eugene McCarthy, Senator Robert Kennedy, Vice President Hubert Humphrey, and Richard Nixon—attended the service. A crowd exceeding sixty thousand listened to the service over loudspeakers outside, and as many as fifty thousand joined in the funeral cortege from Ebenezer to the campus of Morehouse College. King's casket was borne on a farm cart drawn by

---

[76]Garrow, 604-13; Oates, 453-54, 459-64.

[77]Garrow, 619-23; Oates, 473-75.

[78]Garrow, 385-86.

two mules, symbolic of the Poor People's Campaign. At Morehouse, college president emeritus Benjamin Mays gave a brief eulogy before King was buried next to his grandparents at South View Cemetery.[79]

King's widow, Coretta Scott King, founded the Martin Luther King, Jr., Center for Nonviolent Social Change in order to carry on her husband's work and honor his memory. She purchased property on Auburn Avenue east of Ebenezer Baptist Church for this purpose. King's remains were moved to a commemorative site at the Center in 1971. The King Center complex was completed in 1981 and includes King's marble tomb and surrounding plaza, a library and archive, conference center, and exhibit areas (photograph 7).[80]

Photograph 7
Martin Luther King, Jr., Tomb

---

[79]Oates, 477-79; Ralph David Abernathy, *And the Walls Came Tumbling Down* (New York: Harper & Row, 1989), 456-65.

[80]Abernathy, 465; Bruce Keys, King Center for Nonviolent Social Change, telephone conversation, October 1, 1992; Bond & Ryder and Associates, "Project Summary, Martin Luther King Center for Social Change, Atlanta, Georgia," n.d.

ASSOCIATED PROPERTIES

Ebenezer Baptist Church, at 407-413 Auburn Avenue, is the only Site property associated with this context.

Significance

Most of the civil rights campaigns led by Martin Luther King, Jr., occurred outside Atlanta. Atlanta, however, was the headquarters of the SCLC, which King led from 1957 until his death, and King's home and base of operations from 1960 to 1968. During that period, King co-pastored at Ebenezer Baptist Church, participated in desegregation protests in the fall of 1960, and supported the 1964 strike at Scripto, Inc. Except for a brief period when they were in an office building at 43 Exchange Place in downtown Atlanta, SCLC offices have been on Auburn Avenue, first at 208 Auburn and currently at 334 Auburn in the Prince Hall Masonic Temple building, outside the Site but within the Preservation District.[81]

Ebenezer Baptist Church is closely associated with Martin Luther King, Jr.'s leadership of the American Civil Rights Movement. From 1955 to 1960, Martin Luther King, Sr., was Ebenezer's pastor, but his son, Martin Luther King, Jr., preached occasional guest sermons. From 1960 to April 1968, King, Jr., served as co-pastor of Ebenezer, usually preaching one or two sermons a month and performing pastoral duties. As Dr. King's national and international reputation grew, his sermons and speeches, which articulated his views on civil rights and other national issues, received increased attention from the press.

The SCLC was founded at meetings held at Ebenezer Baptist Church in January 1957. From 1957 to 1968, the church was the site of numerous SCLC executive staff and governing board meetings, as well as the 1967 SCLC annual convention. Ebenezer's large education building was especially useful for SCLC meetings. King attended an SCLC executive staff meeting at Ebenezer on March 30, 1968, less than a week before his death. Ebenezer's auditorium was used for rallies and mass meetings concerning local civil rights issues. On December 20, 1964, King addressed a meeting of striking black Scripto employees at Ebenezer.[82]

Ebenezer Baptist Church also symbolizes the crucial role of black ministers and black churches in the Civil Rights Movement. Black clergymen were prominent leaders of the movement and the dominant force behind the SCLC. Most affiliate members of SCLC were black church groups across the South. In almost all southern

---

[81]*Catalog of Historic Structures, Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site and Preservation District* (Atlanta: National Park Service, 1983), 23, 44; Garrow, 171, 200.

[82]Garrow, 573-74, 615; Fairclough, 51; Baldwin, 316.

communities where civil rights campaigns were launched, black churches served as meeting places and command posts.[83] The Civil Rights Movement drew on the idealism, prestige, and organizational strengths of the southern black church. The participation of black ministers and congregations gave the Civil Rights Movement a mass base not present in earlier civil rights efforts. Before the 1950s, black lawyers, teachers, and other professionals had spearheaded attacks on segregation. The church drew members from across class lines and provided the numbers needed for effective mass action. Ebenezer Baptist is a physical reminder of the role black churches and ministers played in achieving for blacks the right to vote and ending racial segregation in public places in America.

The Scripto buildings along Houston Street are not eligible under this context.[84] King and SCLC supported the striking black workers in 1964, but King's involvement on the picket line at the plant was minimal, amounting to 30 minutes on a single day at an undetermined location. The oldest portion of the Scripto complex at 423 Houston (built 1931) was likely not the focus of picketing activities, which seemed to center on a plant entrance on Irwin Street. King indicated his strike support most forcefully at a rally at Ebenezer and in his efforts to organize a boycott of Scripto products. Because of the rally, Ebenezer, a nationally significant resource under this context, is a resource that better represents King's role in the Scripto strike than the surviving plant buildings.

Ebenezer Baptist Church is also locally significant under Criterion C (see chapter 3 below).

Registration Requirements/Integrity

Ebenezer Baptist Church is a religious property and eligible for the National Register only if its primary significance derives from its architectural, artistic, or historical importance. Its listing is clearly justified by its historic importance in connection with the Civil Rights Movement and the life of Martin Luther King, Jr. Although religious leaders figured prominently in the movement, they focused their efforts on political and social change.

A property significant for historical associations under Criteria A and B must retain the essential physical characteristics that defined its appearance during its association with the historic person or events. Ebenezer Baptist Church possesses integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The

---

[83]Fairclough, 12-13, 17-18, 32-34.

[84]The Scripto buildings were added to the Site in the October 1992 boundary expansion. The reasons for the boundary expansion and the properties acquired are addressed in chapter 4.

church also possesses substantial integrity of setting, although land use in the immediately surrounding area changed after 1968, with the construction of the King Center and a community center. The church is still used by the same congregation that built the structure. The exterior materials of the church, stucco and brick, are original. The addition to the chancel at the south end of the church, completed in 1970, has little visual impact and is not visible from Auburn Avenue. A new facade, erected in 1971, altered the appearance of the education building, but the building retains the same functions.

Martin Luther King, Jr.'s remains were moved to the King Center on Auburn Avenue in 1971. King's marble tomb was constructed in 1976, and the surrounding King Center complex was completed in 1981. Although the grave site falls outside of the period of significance for this context, the 1980 legislation that established the Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site included the place "where he is buried" among the resources to be protected and interpreted for future generations.[85] King's national importance, the clear Congressional intent to include the existing grave site, and the grave site's contribution to the commemorative purpose of the Site make it a nationally significant resource eligible under National Register Criterion B.[86] These factors also satisfy the requirements of Criteria Consideration C, which ordinarily excludes graves from eligibility. Although the grave site is less than fifty years old, it is of exceptional importance and therefore meets the standard of Criteria Consideration G, which governs properties that have achieved significance within the last fifty years. The grave site retains all aspects of integrity. A description of the grave site appears in Appendix B.

ELIGIBLE PROPERTIES—NATIONALLY SIGNIFICANT

Ebenezer Baptist Church (1914-1922, 1956)
Martin Luther King, Jr., Grave Site (1976)

NONELIGIBLE PROPERTIES

Scripto, Inc., 423 Houston Street (1931)

---

[85]Public Law 96-428.

[86]The significance of the grave site was confirmed by the Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places in a memorandum to the Chief, Cultural Resources Planning Division, SERO, February 22, 1993.

Recommendations for Additional Research

Secondary sources on the Civil Rights Movement clearly establish that Ebenezer Baptist Church was frequently used for important staff and board meetings of the SCLC and occasionally for rallies and other gatherings connected with the Civil Rights Movement. Additional research in the extensive archives of the SCLC deposited at the King Center Library is recommended to more firmly establish the dates and purposes of these meetings.

A historic structure report should be prepared for Ebenezer Baptist Church, which is the major Site resource for the Civil Rights context.

CHAPTER 3

ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES OF THE MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE, CA. 1880-1950

The architectural resources of the Site reflect its continuing evolution as an inner city Atlanta neighborhood. Population growth, transportation advances, and changing patterns of racial segregation were important factors shaping that evolution. Between 1880 and 1930, Auburn Avenue and Edgewood Avenue within the Site boundaries developed at the same time, but served different needs and populations. Residential, commercial, religious, and public buildings are represented on these avenues, but four principal streets comprise the Site: Jackson and Boulevard running north and south and Edgewood and Auburn running east and west. The resources are clustered by use: Auburn Avenue is residential, and Edgewood Avenue is predominantly commercial.[87]

This chapter demonstrates the diversity of style and type within the Site and how architectural resources and their settings convey historical meaning. The residential resources that dominate Auburn Avenue and the commercial structures along Edgewood Avenue each illustrate different patterns of urban growth, yet they share characteristics with other urban communities which emerged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The residential resources incorporate elements of identifiable national architectural styles, such as Italianate, Queen Anne, and Craftsman, which are applied to vernacular house types. The commercial and public resources apply

---

[87]All of the following information on area development and change, including building construction dates and the evolving racial composition of the area, is culled from several resources. Sanborn Maps available at Georgia State University for 1899, 1911, 1920, 1923, and 1932 were consulted. Files at the Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site contain information obtained primarily from Atlanta City Directories and building permits. Several area studies of the Birth-Home block landscape both historic and contemporary were consulted, including a 1937 Cadastral Survey by the Works Projects Administration. Historic aerial photographs for 1936 and 1949 were perused. In addition, a 1928 City Engineer's Topographic Map of the area was consulted.

elements of the Italianate, Romanesque Revival, Moderne, and International styles to nineteenth and early twentieth century brick commercial buildings. Regional influences also are evident, especially in form. Shotgun houses and gabled ells predominate. Porches constitute the largest common regional denominator. Most of the Site's resources are vernacular in character. They adapt stylistic elements to suit economy and decoration, and they are traditionally massed.

The most intact historic area of Auburn Avenue lies between Boulevard and Howell and commonly is referred to as the Birth-Home Block, because it includes the birthplace of Martin Luther King, Jr. (photograph 8). This area contains the oldest residential resources and the highest level of integrity. Located on this portion of Auburn are twenty-three historic residences constructed between circa 1886 and 1933. Two lots, 502, which contained a house and store, and 509, which had an apartment building, are now vacant. One modern intrusion is located at 531 Auburn Avenue and consists of two 1954 brick apartment buildings, on a lot formerly containing four wood dwellings comprising the Baptist Memorial Institute School.

West of the Birth-Home Block lies the King Center, the modern city of Atlanta community center and natatorium, and Ebenezer Baptist Church. Prior to 1960s urban renewal, this portion of Auburn Avenue consisted of wooden, one- and two-

Photograph 8
North side of Auburn Avenue, between Hogue and Howell Streets

story dwellings, likely similar to those farther east. The church, completed in 1922, anchors the western portion of Auburn Avenue historically but is now isolated from the Site's other historic resources. Farther west lies the historic Sweet Auburn district which served the black residential community to the east.

Thirteen additional dwellings complete the historic residential resources adjacent to the principal Birth-Home Block dwellings: three shotgun houses on an alley off of Auburn Avenue, three duplexes on Old Wheat Street, one duplex on Boulevard, five residences on Howell Street, and one on Hogue Street. These remaining resources are in various stages of deterioration. The buildings on Old Wheat and Howell streets are most endangered. The Birth-Home Block represents the southern edge of a substantial late nineteenth and early twentieth century black middle-class residential community roughly bounded by Jackson on the west, Randolph Street on the east, and Forrest Avenue on the north. Housing in this community ranged from plain two- to three-room houses to modest two-story wood dwellings. The 1917 fire destroyed many homes in this community, and the construction of Interstate 75/85 further obliterated evidence of the community.[88]

Edgewood Avenue, within the Site, is entirely commercial with sixteen brick buildings constructed prior to 1916, three additional buildings erected between 1920 and 1945, and the remaining twelve buildings representative of post-war construction (photograph 9). Historic resources are concentrated around the intersection of Boulevard and Edgewood Avenue and represent a growth spurt between 1908 and 1915. Many of these buildings exhibit typical early twentieth century commercial architecture associated with residential and transportation-related urban expansion.

A second characteristic of Edgewood Avenue is the preponderance of vacant lots and nonhistoric buildings. East of the Boulevard, the historic integrity of Edgewood Avenue buildings decreases both in quantity and quality. The Roane Building, constructed in 1906, stands alone on the southwest corner of Edgewood and Howell Street, a full block away from any other historic buildings. At one time, one- and two-story wood dwellings occupied Edgewood Avenue east of Boulevard, an extension of the residential area to the north. When these residences were removed, many between 1928 and 1936, the lots either remained vacant or had postwar commercial buildings erected on them. Vacant, undeveloped lots have characterized Edgewood Avenue throughout the period from 1880 to the present.

Edgewood Avenue also has suffered significant losses of historic commercial buildings in the past ten years. Buildings at 410, 414, 461-465, and 491-493 Edgewood are gone. One of the last remaining residences at 528 Edgewood, built in 1895, also has vanished.

---

[88]Ambrose, et al., Part I, 2-17.

Photograph 9
Edgewood Avenue

In this context, the buildings within the Site are evaluated for significance in the area of architecture. No buildings within the Site have national significance under Criterion C, but many have local architectural significance. In general, the residential resources on Auburn Avenue illustrate the staged growth of the community and are visible evidence of its changing population. These resources retain a high degree of integrity, although their material condition varies considerably. The resources on Edgewood Avenue are more problematic because structural deterioration or destruction and modern intrusions have altered the corridor's historic fabric. However, the dominant historic commercial development of Edgewood Avenue is obvious, and most remaining buildings retain integrity. A discussion of integrity and registration requirements appears at the end of the chapter.

Atlanta Historical Development

Atlanta began as a rail terminus. In 1836, the Georgia legislature approved the construction of a state railroad, the Atlantic & Western, to run from the Tennessee line to the Chattahoochee River in the Georgia Piedmont. The engineer laying out the line chose a terminal point on a ridge eight miles south of the river. By 1846, the Macon & Western Railroad and the Georgia Railroad connected with the Atlantic & Western, forming a triangular junction around which the city of Atlanta grew. In

1861, at the beginning of the Civil War, Atlanta was a city of ten thousand and an important rail hub and manufacturing center for the Southeast.[89]

Virtually destroyed during the war, Atlanta rebuilt quickly, reaching a population of 65,000 in 1890. Nineteenth-century business activity concentrated around the railroad junction with most residential areas within walking distance of downtown. Atlanta's affluent citizens lived along streets located on ridges radiating from the central business district, particularly Peachtree and Washington streets. Working-class neighborhoods flourished around factories and rolling mills located along the railroad corridors emanating from downtown. Most of Atlanta's black population lived in several scattered settlements, often on less desirable land near railroads or in low-lying areas.[90]

Street railways, powered first by horses and mules, and in the late 1880s by electricity, facilitated the expansion of Atlanta beyond pedestrian limits. The Site lies approximately a mile and a quarter from the central business district and represents the commercial and residential growth advanced by streetcar expansion. In 1884, the Gate City Street Railroad Company constructed a horsecar line which traveled from the central business district along Pryor Street to Wheat Street (later changed to Auburn Avenue) and along Wheat to Jackson Street, then north on Jackson. This streetcar line provided direct access to downtown and spurred residential development along Auburn Avenue. In 1889, entrepreneur Joel Hurt operated Atlanta's first electric street railway along Edgewood Avenue linking downtown and the suburb of Inman Park. In the 1890s, existing horsecar lines were electrified, and new electric streetcar lines were built. By the mid-1890s, streetcar lines on Auburn and Edgewood avenues provided commuters direct access from their homes to jobs and shopping downtown.[91]

AUBURN AVENUE DEVELOPMENT

Beginning in 1880, the heirs of John Lynch began to divide and sell his large property holdings along Auburn Avenue between Jackson and Howland (now Howell). Some residential development was evident, but it was located primarily north of Auburn Avenue. 521 Auburn Avenue, built on property formerly part of the John Lynch

---

[89]Atlanta Urban Design Commission, *Atlanta's Lasting Landmarks* (Atlanta: Atlanta Urban Design Commission, 1987), 8-10.

[90]Atlanta Urban Design Commission, 9-10; Ambrose et al., Part I, 2-2; Garrett, vol. II, 208.

[91]Garrett, vol. I, 879, 957, vol. II, 188-89.

estate between 1882 and 1888, was an early residence on Auburn Avenue east of Boulevard. It is the only extant residence built prior to 1890 within the Site. Other residences appeared in rapid succession beginning in the 1890s. By 1899, most lots along Auburn between Jackson and Howell were developed, although denser residential development remained west. The residences within the Site varied in size and type, but most were two-story wood dwellings with one-story rear extensions. The north side of Auburn Avenue between Hogue and Howell has shallow, narrow lots occupied by seven two-story dwellings. Access to the rear of the north side lots was off Old Wheat Street. The south side, however, developed less rigorously. This resulted in larger lots and fewer houses, with varied, and deeper, setbacks from the street. Access to the rear of the southside lots was by driveways off of Auburn Avenue.

Small-scale commercial development accompanied residential growth. Several corner stores and restaurants served Auburn Avenue residents. One was located on the northwest corner of Boulevard and Auburn. Another corner grocery operated by a succession of whites was located across from the Birth Home in a building constructed in 1909 on the northwest corner of Hogue and Auburn (502 Auburn). During the 1920s, a small, one-room building (521-1/2 Auburn Avenue) was intermittently operated as a soda fountain and cafe, in front of 521 Auburn Avenue. Another small building, located at 57 Howell, housed a restaurant during the 1930s. The Jenkins family, owners of the parcel of land in the triangle bounded by Auburn, Old Wheat and Howell streets, built two store buildings (554 and 556 Auburn) adjacent to their residence at 550 Auburn. The buildings, now demolished, were leased to a series of white grocers and butchers. The original residence was divided into apartments ca. 1900, and the Jenkins family owned the properties until 1963.

Two churches, Ebenezer Baptist and Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church, are located within the Site. In 1912, the Catholic church constructed a three-story stone church and school building. Fire Station Number Six occupied the southeast corner of Auburn and Boulevard and served the surrounding residential community, consisting primarily of wood structures, beginning in 1894.[92]

In 1905, the Empire State Investment Company developed the northeast corner of Auburn and Boulevard. Empire bought the unimproved property from Adolphus Tittlebaum for $3650 and built nine duplex dwellings that occupied half of the block between Boulevard and Hogue. One of the lots was sold in November 1905 for $1800 as a rental property. These duplex shotgun dwellings were a sharp break from

[92] Ambrose, et al., Part II, 2-19.

the existing houses on Auburn but were typical of dwellings to the north. They also represented the first low-cost rental housing built in the Site.[93]

Prior to 1900, Auburn Avenue east of Jackson Street developed as a predominantly white, middle-class residential district. Single-family, one- and two-story houses constructed in the 1890s lined principal streets. Some multiple-family dwellings were present, but the majority were large, modestly decorated houses. Many had stables and wood and coal sheds in the rear. When Empire constructed the nine duplexes, it foreshadowed a change, suggesting that multiple-family housing was in demand in the area. Many multiple-family units were constructed on alleys or subdivided portions of original lots. The 1906 race riot, fought in the streets and on the streetcars less than a mile away, also influenced the course of development on Auburn Avenue.

Between 1909 and 1910, most white-occupied houses on the Birth-Home Block were sold or leased to blacks. By 1920, the Auburn Avenue neighborhood was overwhelmingly black. Auburn Avenue comprised the southern boundary of a developing black middle-class neighborhood which adjoined Morris Brown College, established in 1881 and located at Boulevard and Irwin Street.[94] But not all neighborhood residents were middle class. Many were service workers or manual laborers. Several duplex residences were constructed between 1911 and 1928 behind the larger homes on Auburn Avenue and on alleys accessed from Edgewood Avenue to the south. The larger houses on Auburn were occupied by black professionals and business people. The multiple-family dwellings and the small, two- and three-room houses sheltered working-class families.[95]

Auburn Avenue west of Jackson, within the Preservation District but outside the Site, developed as a black business enclave following the race riot of 1906, when many black businesses left downtown. Businesses ranged from small retail concerns like groceries and barber shops to banks and insurance companies serving the Atlanta black community. Black entrepreneurs developed a number of commercial buildings in this area, including the three-story Rucker Building of 1904 (158-160 Auburn Avenue) and the four-story Herndon Building of 1926 (231-245 Auburn Avenue).

---

[93]Deed Book 177, Page 370 between A. Tittlebaum and Empire State Investment Company; Deed Book 194, Page 78 between W.A. Foster and Empire State Investment Company, Fulton County Courthouse, Clerk of Court, Atlanta, Georgia. City directory entries demonstrate that by 1910, these houses were occupied by blacks.

[94]Morris Brown College remained on Boulevard until 1932, when it moved to the West Side and became part of the Atlanta University complex (Garrett, vol. II, 28).

[95]Ambrose, et al., Part I, 2-9; *Catalog of Historic Structures*, 66-78.

The six-story Odd Fellows Building, constructed in 1912, and its adjacent 1913 auditorium building (228-250 Auburn Avenue) were important centers of black business and social life. Auburn Avenue remained a center of black business activity into the 1950s.[96]

Although the black business district west of Jackson continued to prosper between 1920 and 1950, Auburn Avenue and surrounding residential streets failed to attract or keep community residents engaged in professional occupations. By 1930, few middle-class residents remained on Auburn Avenue. This decline manifested itself in various ways. Several multiple-family dwellings were constructed on the Birth-Home Block and adjacent streets. Apartment houses at 509 Auburn (later demolished) and 506 Auburn were built in 1925 and 1933, respectively. Another quadraplex at 54 Howell Street was constructed in 1931 and subdivided an already crowded house lot. During the 1930s, Auburn Avenue witnessed the subdivision of single-family dwellings, the deterioration of its housing, and increased tenancy. By 1940, the U.S. Census reported that two-thirds of the dwelling units in the Site were in disrepair and 77 percent lacked a private bath.[97]

By 1940, few people living on Auburn could afford to own their homes, and the area had become increasingly transient. Most tenants remained less than five years.[98] Most residents had little money for house maintenance, and by the late 1930s Martin Luther King, Sr., described the Birth-Home Block neighborhood as "running down." He moved his family to a house several blocks away on Boulevard in 1941.[99] Between 1930 and 1950, Auburn Avenue increasingly became an impoverished black working-class district. In the 1960s, when housing options for blacks in other parts of the city expanded again, the Auburn Avenue area began to decline more rapidly.[100]

The historic streetscape features of Auburn Avenue are essential in establishing the physical context in which King was born, where he lived, and where he worked. The major spatial relationships that define the streetscape within the Birth-Home block, have remained relatively constant since its development in the late nineteenth century.

---

[96]Ambrose et al., Part I, 1-29; *Catalog of Historic Structures*, 17-29.

[97]Ambrose, et al., Part I, 2-33.

[98]City Directory research for the period 1890 to 1950 indicated a variety of laboring tenants along Auburn Avenue. Very few remained more than five years.

[99]Oates, 12.

[100]Ambrose, et al., Part I, 2-36.

A fairly consistent right-of-way on Auburn has been maintained, measuring fifty-eight to sixty feet wide within which a forty-foot wide (curb to curb) two-way traffic lane is centered.

According to City Council records, brick sidewalks were laid with granite curbing along both sides of Auburn Avenue through the Birth-Home block as early as the 1890s. This predates the paving of the street in this area by at least a decade. Boulevard, where the street car line turned north off Auburn Avenue, often marks a transition point in the city services, and records show that in 1913 residents east of Boulevard petitioned to have Auburn paved from Boulevard to Randolph. Although the date of the first paving of this area of Auburn Avenue is not clear from the records, City Council minutes do show that in 1922 the "old pavement" was "condemned" from Boulevard to Randolph Street and was to be repaved with concrete. At this time, the existing brick sidewalks along Auburn Avenue were also to be replaced with concrete walks with the granite curbs retained.[101] Remnants of the original brick sidewalks survive at the northwest corner of Howell Street and Auburn Avenue and along the north side of Auburn Avenue, in the triangle east of Howell Street (photograph 10). An original stretch of the exposed river-stone aggregate sidewalk that was poured in the 1920s exists along the north side of Auburn Avenue between Hogue Street and Howell Street.

In 1924 an ordinance calling for the paving of Howell Street NE was passed and specified to be "Extra Vibrolithic concrete, six inches thick." City Council records make no mention of the street surfaces along Old Wheat and Hogue, but by the 1937 Cadastral Survey both of these streets were paved with concrete, with granite curbs. Old Wheat Street never had sidewalks, and the earlier brick sidewalks were to remain along Howell Street, although Hogue Street sidewalks were concrete by the 1937 Cadastral survey.[102] These original concrete sidewalks still exist along Hogue Street between Auburn Avenue and Old Wheat Street.

Other streetscape features that have been described in oral histories to have existed within the Site during the 1929-1941 period include street trees (two of the three noted in 1949 aerial photography survive at the northwest corner of Auburn Avenue at the intersection with Howell Street), street lighting at the top of wooden poles and described by former residents as "coolie hat" lamps (no extant examples), and fire

---

[101] Atlanta City Council Minutes, 1920-1940, Atlanta History Center, Atlanta, Georgia; *Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site Cultural Landscape Report: The Birth-Home Block* (Atlanta: National Park Service, Southeast Regional Office, unpublished draft, 1993), 18-19.

[102] *Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site Cultural Landscape Report,* 19-20.

hydrants on the northwest corners of Auburn and Boulevard, Hogue, and Howell (1970s models have replaced the 1930s hydrants in the same locations).[103]

Residential Architectural Resources

The architectural resources of the Auburn Avenue portion of the Site (which includes adjoining portions of Boulevard, Hogue, and Howell streets) are predominantly residential. The following discussion of the residential buildings of Auburn Avenue is organized chronologically. Site resources will be related to broader currents in American architecture from 1880 to 1950.

The two primary analytical categories for discussing American houses are styles and types. The concept of architectural style is a notoriously slippery one, embracing both the decorative treatment and the overall configuration or form of a house. Ornament is usually the clearest indicator of style, with form a secondary aspect. For example, the Italianate style is defined in terms of its decoration (an elaborate cornice,

Photograph 10
Brick sidewalk, north side of Auburn Avenue east of Howell Street

[103] *Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site Cultural Landscape Report*, 20-22.

heavy brackets, and molded window hoods), proportions (tall, narrow windows and doors), and typical forms (low-pitched roof, overhanging eaves, and towers). Stylistic analysis emphasizes successive style periods, bounded by approximate beginning and ending dates. The concept of style is most useful in discussing the unique designs of professional architects for affluent clients, representing perhaps 5 percent of American buildings. These are referred to as "high style" examples. The remaining 95 percent of buildings are usually classified as vernacular architecture.

House types, rather than styles, are the usual analytical categories applied to vernacular architecture. House types are identified on the basis of ground plan (e.g., square, rectangle, L-shape), number of stories, and roof configuration (e.g., hip, gable). An example of a house type is the gable front and wing house, or L-shaped house, defined by its L-shaped ground plan and cross-gable roof. The amount of ornament found on vernacular houses varies considerably. Examples of vernacular building types that incorporate ornament are widely viewed as borrowing these elements from high style architecture. Thus, a vernacular L-shaped house may have a cornice and brackets associated with the Italianate style.

Many terms describing house styles and types have gained nearly universal currency and will be used in this study. Auburn Avenue residences combine traditional massing (i.e., rectangular, L-shaped, square, or complex) common to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and elements of popular national architectural styles. At times, a house embodies both the massing and the decoration of a period and style. But most commonly, the houses along the Birth-Home Block are vernacular houses with various levels of stylistic decoration. Some Site resources, such as the double shotgun cottages, are best analyzed in terms of house type since their decorative elements are not rigidly defined by a dominant style. Other resources, such as the two-story houses on the Birth-Home Block, represent traditional Queen Anne massing and decorative elements. Most Birth-Home Block resources are not the works of an individual architect, and thus, they are typical of residential architecture in early twentieth century American cities.

Single-Family Residences

ITALIANATE—The large single-family house at 521 Auburn, built in the 1880s and subsequently divided into apartments, is a Georgian cottage type (square massed) with Italianate stylistic details. The oldest extant Site building, the house was constructed on a large lot at a time when much of the surrounding land was undeveloped.

The Italianate style was popular for residences from approximately 1840 to 1880, with its greatest acceptance coming after 1860. The style originated in England in the early nineteenth century as part of the enthusiasm for the Picturesque. Devotees of the Picturesque rejected formality and classical symmetry and sought inspiration from

exotic sources. Informal, asymmetrical Italian farmhouses were the inspiration for the Italianate and Italian villa styles in England and America. The architectural pattern books of Andrew Jackson Downing, first published in the 1840s and reprinted into the 1880s, helped popularize the Italianate style in America. The Italianate style combines both symmetrical and asymmetrical L- or T-shape plans and a tall tower. Builders soon applied Italianate details to traditional rectangular American house forms.[104]

Italianate houses typically had low-pitched roofs with broad overhanging eaves; elaborately molded cornices with heavy, often paired, brackets; tall, narrow windows, commonly with round or segmental arch heads; and frequently elaborate window crowns. Paired windows were common, and porches were almost always present, sometimes with ornate carved and turned balusters and posts. Examples of the style are not abundant in the South because the Civil War, Reconstruction, and the depression of the 1870s limited building activity in the region during the style's period of greatest popularity.[105]

The house at 521 Auburn Avenue exhibits Italianate decorative elements applied to a traditional vernacular house type (photograph 11). The Georgian cottage type has a long history in the South and is characterized by a square or nearly square plan, a central hall with two rooms on either side, exterior symmetry, and a height not exceeding one and one-half stories.[106] 521 Auburn Avenue does not display the asymmetry and two- to three-story height often associated with the Italianate style. Italianate features on the house include a molded cornice with heavy brackets, projecting bays at the sides with similar cornices and brackets, and hooded windows. The use of Italianate features on a house built when Auburn Avenue was semi-rural in character recalls the ultimate origins of the style in the farmhouses of the Italian countryside.

521 Auburn is set back farther from the street on a larger lot than its later neighbors. The front yard is dominated by two oak trees and is bordered by a hedge and a fence. The historic concrete front walk has distinct detailing that includes a diagonal scoring pattern and rolled curb-edge detail along the length of the walk. At

---

[104]Henry-Russell Hitchcock, *Architecture: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin, 1987), 158, 601; Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Knopf, 1984), 211-12.

[105]McAlester and McAlester, 211-12; John J.-G. Blumenson, *Identifying American Architecture: A Pictorial Guide to the Styles*. 2d ed. (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1981), 37.

[106]*Georgia's Living Places: Historic Houses in Their Landscaped Settings* (Atlanta: Historic Preservation Section, Division of Parks, Recreation & Historic Sites, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, 1991), 1-26.

Photograph 11
521 Auburn and sidewalk store building

the front northeast corner of the lot, behind the sidewalk, is a plain, rectangular frame building, constructed about 1920, that was operated by blacks as a soda fountain and cafe in the 1930s and may have had other commercial uses.[107] As the only extant store building within the residential portion of the Site, this structure is an important reminder of the diverse character of Auburn Avenue during the period of Dr. King's residence.

QUEEN ANNE—As Atlanta outgrew its pedestrian limits in the 1890s, large, two-story houses were constructed on Auburn Avenue. Most of these single-family houses, including the Birth Home and its neighbors, incorporated features associated with the Queen Anne style (photograph 12). Queen Anne is a stylistic term that incorporates decorative elements and house typology. A defining characteristic of the style is complex massing and multiple roof forms. Other Site houses from the 1890s are

[107] *Catalog of Historic Structures,* 74.

examples of vernacular gable front and gable-front-and-wing houses (gabled-ell) with Queen Anne style decorative elements.

The Queen Anne style was popular nationally from approximately 1880 to 1910. The style originated in the 1860s and 1870s with the English designs of Richard Norman Shaw, W. Eden Nesfield, and others. These architects revived late medieval and early Renaissance forms and materials, such as half-timbering, casement windows, elaborate brick chimney pots, gable-end barge boards, and ceramic tile cladding of exterior walls, and used them in novel combinations. Henry Hobson Richardson's 1874 Watts Sherman House in Newport, Rhode Island, generally considered the first American example of the Queen Anne style, incorporated many of these features. The influential designs of Shaw and Richardson were expansive and manorial, but the vast majority of American Queen Anne houses were modest wooden structures built for the middle class.[108]

Photograph 12
522 Auburn Avenue

[108]Hitchcock, 291-94, 364; McAlester and McAlester, 263-68.

American Queen Anne houses achieved dramatic visual effects through the use of contrasting textures, colors, shapes, and materials. Characteristics are irregular, asymmetrical plans; hipped roofs with lower cross gables; projecting features such as bays, turrets, and gable overhangs; elaborate wooden millwork; and the use of textured decorative shingles on exterior walls. Porches were nearly universal and often wrapped around one or both sides of a house. Queen Anne house plans were usually asymmetrical, with an off-center entry and an informal arrangement of rooms. Builders' pattern books helped popularize the style nationally, and railroad transportation made available the mass-produced wooden ornament typical of the style.[109]

The Birth Home at 501 Auburn, built circa 1894 for a white family named Holbrook and restored by the NPS, is a good example of a two-story middle-class house incorporating Queen Anne elements (see photograph 5, page 26). In plan, the house is an elongated rectangle with shallow projections on all four sides. The principal roof is hipped, with gable roofs over the projections. The asymmetrical facade is dominated by a front-facing gable and a one-story, full-width porch that wraps partly around the west side of the structure. The porch has turned posts, scrollwork brackets, and a simple openwork balustrade. Paired double-hung windows with louvered shutters are present at the first and second floors under the gable end, which contains a rectangular vent and is bordered below by a pent roof. To the right of the entrance is a circular window. At the second floor, above the entrance, is a small porch with a shed roof. The porch was originally accessed by a door, which was converted to a double-hung window before 1929. The house has weatherboard siding, with decorative shingles in the gable ends.[110]

The Birth Home is set on a typically long and narrow urban lot forty feet wide and 195 feet deep. The house is set back thirty-eight feet from the front lot line and is reached by a walkway of octagonal pavers. A concrete block retaining wall, approximately two feet high, separates the elevated front yard from the sidewalk. A privet hedge, approximately three feet high, is planted on top of the wall and encloses the front yard. The east side yard of the Birth Home shares a driveway with 503 Auburn Avenue. A shed, which no longer exists, sat on the east side of the back yard and was converted to a garage by the King family when they bought a car. Other

---

[109]McAlester and McAlester, 263-68; Mary Mix Foley, *The American House* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980), 175-76; Carole Rifkind, *A Field Guide to American Architecture* (New York: New American Library, 1980), 63-65.

[110]"Historic Structure Report: The Martin Luther King Birth Home, Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site, Atlanta, Georgia (Draft)" (Denver: Denver Service Center, National Park Service), Historical Data Section, 7.

back yard features no longer extant include a vegetable garden on the east,[111] another small shed behind the garden, which served as a coal shed, and wire clotheslines that ran from the house to the shed, supported in the middle with sticks, and from the west corner of the house to the fence. The entire back yard was enclosed by an unpainted board fence, with irregularly spaced boards. The west side yard was extremely narrow. Only a remnant of the low wall, which filled the narrow space between the Birth Home and 497 Auburn Avenue, exists.

The Birth Home's main entrance opens on a small foyer that extends into a sidehall running the length of the house. On the east side of the hall (to the left as one enters) from front to back are a parlor, study, dining room, and kitchen. On the west side of the hall are stairs to the second floor and the basement and a bedroom and bath at the back. The second floor hall extends the length of the building, with three bedrooms on the east and one on the west.

BIRTH-HOME BLOCK—Most houses on the Birth-Home Block built in the 1890s exhibit Queen Anne features. Like the Birth Home, the two-story Harper house at 535 Auburn Avenue has a hipped principal roof and a front-facing gable projection. The gable end projects over a three-sided cutaway bay, with decorative sawn brackets in the overhangs. A porch with turned posts and a stick frieze runs across the front of the house. Other Queen Anne variations represented at the Site include two front-facing gables (518 Auburn Avenue), jigsawn wall panels (503 Auburn Avenue), and decorative trusswork in the gable end (514 Auburn Avenue). These houses demonstrate the visual variety achieved through combinations of mass-produced ornament in this period.

Distinctive landscape features associated with the Queen Anne houses include concrete front walks (518 Auburn Avenue), rear and side-yard walls of mixed rubble materials (510, 514, and 522 Auburn Avenue) and side-yard retaining walls to hold the grade of the front yard even with Auburn Avenue (526 and 530 Auburn Avenue). Granite steps with a thin marble cheek-wall treatment, dating from before 1915, are extant at the sidewalk of 503 Auburn Avenue. An early ornamental iron fence remains around the front and side yards of 530 Auburn Avenue (photograph 13). One of the last rear yard outbuildings/garages within Site survives at 497 Auburn Avenue.

Several Site houses, built between 1890 and 1910, are vernacular types with limited decoration. These include a gable-front-and-wing house at 546 Auburn Avenue, a T-plan, side-gabled house with a hip roof rear portion at 540 Auburn Avenue (photograph 14), and gable-front houses at 24 and 28 Howell Street and 53

---

[111]The location of the vegetable garden recently planted in the back yard does not correspond to the probable historic location of the Kings' vegetable garden.

Photograph 13
Iron fence at 530 Auburn Avenue

Photograph 14
540 Auburn Avenue

Hogue (photograph 15). Decoration on these houses is limited to the porches that exhibit turned or chamfered posts, brackets, and balustrades.

After 1900, few large single-family homes were built in the Auburn Avenue neighborhood. Middle-class blacks moved into existing single-family houses, and new construction for working-class blacks was limited to duplexes or small apartment buildings. Many duplexes were double shotgun houses, a common southern vernacular type. Twelve double shotgun houses are located within the Site.

Photograph 15
53 Hogue Street

Multiple-Family Residences

A distinctive multiple-family house type within the Site is the double shotgun house. Appearing in New Orleans as early as the 1830s, the shotgun house was diffused throughout the South, at first along river trade routes and later in other areas. The type's greatest popularity came between 1880 and 1920, when it was a common choice for mill housing and for speculative developments marketed to working-class whites and blacks. The origins of the type have been debated by historians, some of whom have argued that slaves brought the type from West Africa to Haiti and then to New Orleans. Others have suggested that it originated when the traditional hall and parlor plan was turned sideways to accommodate narrow urban lots.[112]

The defining characteristic of the shotgun type is a plan one room wide and two or three rooms deep. The name derives from this arrangement of rooms opening directly into one another. A shotgun blast fired through the front door supposedly would travel through the house and exit at the back without hitting a wall. The long, narrow configuration of the house made the type a good fit for narrow-frontage urban lots. Shotguns are one-story houses with a door and window on the front elevation and a hip or gable roof. Shotguns commonly exhibit engaged or attached front porches, typically gabled or shed. The chimneys are usually central. Many shotguns lack stylistic features, since they are utilitarian in nature, but some examples incorporate decorative millwork. The double shotgun house is a four-bay, duplex version consisting of two shotgun-plan flats under one roof, joined by a party wall. The porches, chimney placement, and entry location vary among double shotguns, which first appeared in New Orleans around 1850 and spread throughout the South.[113]

In 1905, the Empire State Investment Company purchased the western portion of the block bounded by Auburn Avenue, Boulevard, and Old Wheat Street and constructed nine double shotgun houses there (photograph 16). Built as speculative rental housing for whites, the double shotguns were all black-occupied by 1910.[114] As built, these double shotguns had hipped roofs, weatherboard siding, and

---

[112]Roulhac Toledano, Sally Kittredge Evans, and Mary Louise Christovich, "Types and Styles," in *New Orleans Architecture*, vol. IV (Gretna, Louisiana: Pelican Publishing, 1974), 71-72; John Michael Vlach, "The Shotgun House: An African Architectural Legacy," in *Common Places: Readings in American Vernacular Architecture*, ed. Dell Upton and John Michael Vlach (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986), 58-77; McAlester and McAlester, 90.

[113]*The Shotgun House* (Louisville: Preservation Alliance of Louisville and Jefferson County, 1980), 5-7; Toledano, et al., 71-72.

[114]*Catalog of Historic Structures*, 66-68.

Photograph 16
Double shotgun houses at 472-474 and 476-478 Auburn Avenue

hipped front porches for each unit. Ornament was limited to turned posts and sawn brackets on the porches. Many single and double shotgun houses are located within the Preservation District, an area bounded by Old Wheat Street, Boulevard, Irwin Street, and Randolph Street. The shotgun houses within the Site and the Preservation District vary in ornamentation, roof type, number of rooms, and type of porches, but they all served as inexpensive, multiple-family dwellings for working-class blacks.

Landscape features historically associated with the double shotguns were swept (dirt) yards. No extant examples of this feature are found in the neighborhood. Paved and unpaved alleys and their associated infill structures were once common in the area; the alley and three double shotgun residences behind 493 Auburn Avenue are the only surviving examples within the Site.

In the 1920s and 1930s, a number of the single-family houses on Auburn were converted to apartments or rooming houses. Small apartment buildings were also constructed in this period. Three small apartment buildings, constructed between 1911 and 1933, are located at 491-493 Auburn Avenue, 506 Auburn Avenue, and 54

Howell Street. All are plain, two-story, rectangular structures with two-story porches, weatherboard siding, and hip or gable roofs (photograph 17). Built for working-class blacks, these buildings are utilitarian and largely unornamented. The flats in these buildings are generally small; those on the first floor have access directly from the porch, while central stair halls provide access to upper floors. These buildings probably offered shared bathrooms when built. The 1931 apartment building at 54 Howell Street has exposed rafters and triangular braces in the gable ends, features often associated with the Craftsman style, popular from approximately 1905 to 1930.

COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT

The commercial strip along Edgewood Avenue typifies business districts, developed between 1890 and 1930, located along streetcar lines that emanated from American downtowns. Streetcars facilitated the expansion of metropolitan areas through increased residential and commercial growth. Neighborhood shopping districts developed to serve the new residential areas and replicated the land-use patterns established in downtown business districts. These outlying commercial areas also extended the central business district and represented the city's expanding commercial perimeter.

Photograph 17
54 Howell Street

Edgewood Avenue developed initially as a residential area. In 1899, one- and two-story frame dwellings dominated the street from Piedmont to Randolph. Within the Site, most homes were modest L-plan cottages, shotguns, or duplexes. Vacant lots dotted Edgewood Avenue with denser residential development south and east towards the railroad corridor and west toward the central business district. Two large, two-story dwellings, typical of older residential development, occupied the northeast and northwest corners of Jackson and Edgewood. Several properties had stables and coal sheds behind the houses. Most houses were located close to the street with front or side porches. Lot size varied considerably with the larger lots often crowded with two or more dwellings.

Several corner stores, adjacent to dwellings, catered to the community along Edgewood at Howell, on Boulevard, and on Chamberlin (now Chamberlain) Street. A large church, the Fourth Presbyterian Church, served the community at Chamberlin and Jackson. Similar to Auburn Avenue, Edgewood was racially mixed between 1890 and 1905. West of Boulevard was predominantly black, and east of Boulevard was predominantly white. After 1905, commercial buildings began replacing residences along Edgewood Avenue extending from downtown to the east. Compared to Auburn, Edgewood Avenue developed earlier commercially, but never gained the popularity of "Sweet Auburn's" black commercial district. In addition, the commercial development along Edgewood catered to white business interests, although black workers likely were employed at some concerns.

In the first decade of the twentieth century, Edgewood Avenue between Jackson and Daniel Street developed as a commercial and light industrial district, with one- and two-story commercial buildings ultimately replacing almost all residences. East of Daniel Street remained mostly residential until the late 1930s, although many homes on the north side of Edgewood were removed, and the lots left vacant. B. D. Watkins, a real estate developer associated with Asa Candler, president and majority owner of the Coca-Cola Company, built seven two-story brick buildings in 1908 and 1909. Another businessman, Marvin P. Roane, financed two buildings in 1906 and 1909. These two men contributed greatly to the commercial development of Edgewood Avenue.

In 1911, Edgewood Avenue hosted a variety of businesses including retail stores, a bottling company, coffee roasting, and electric motor manufacturing. By 1925, industrial concerns flourished, and a brush factory, peanut butter factory, another bottling company, auto storage, and a filling station lined Edgewood. Typically, the buildings' tenants were white and operated groceries, dry goods stores, liquor stores, cleaners, barber/beauty shops, pawn shops, upholstering, plumbing, shoemaking,

cabinet making, auto repair, and auto parts supply shops and served a racially mixed working-class clientele.[115]

Between 1908 and 1927, the commercial development of Edgewood Avenue had reached its peak. The south side of Edgewood had two blocks of nearly continuous buildings between Fitzgerald and Daniel. These buildings, constructed by Watkins and others, were situated on short narrow lots with their front elevations abutting the sidewalk. Little vegetation obscured the buildings in the commercial area. Glassed storefronts commonly characterized the street level facades. As private automobiles increasingly dominated the streets, painted signs on the facades of buildings advertised the stores' goods and where customers could park.

Several automobile-related buildings, two service stations and a drive-in store, were constructed just before and after World War II. The 1946 Circle Drive-In Liquor store incorporated elements of Moderne architecture. This building has suffered neglect, for many years serving as a storage area for Danneman's grocery store to the east. It currently houses a cafe for the homeless. Three other post-war buildings replaced residential buildings formerly located between Daniel and Howell. Most of these buildings provided parking in front with the buildings set back from the sidewalk. The most notable, the McDonald Sheet Metal Company, influenced by the International style, is still occupied by an industrial concern.

As the residential areas in the Auburn Avenue vicinity declined, the businesses along Edgewood also suffered deterioration. Suburban growth, outlying shopping malls, and industrial parks further diminished the economic function of these commercial and industrial corridors. In addition, the construction of Interstates 75/85 bisected the continuous commercial corridor along Edgewood emanating from downtown, thus isolating the eastern commercial area. Many buildings continue to house business concerns, and some economic revitalization is occurring. However, vacant lots, both historic and due to loss of buildings, and deteriorating buildings still characterize these corridors.

COMMERCIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES

The extant architectural resources of Edgewood Avenue are composed of one- and two-story commercial and light industrial buildings. Although much has been lost, surviving buildings represent two major periods of construction: 1905 to 1915 and 1939 to 1955. In total, there are twenty-nine buildings on Edgewood between Jackson and Howell streets, with sixteen constructed during this earlier period and six built

[115]*Catalog of Historic Structures*, 56-64, 84-89.

during the latter period. The remaining thirteen were either constructed between these periods or followed the 1939-1955 period.

Commercial Buildings

The development of Edgewood Avenue as a commercial corridor at the beginning of this century is reflected in the late Victorian buildings which line the avenue. These were utilitarian buildings fashioned primarily in the Italianate style of architecture, similar to those constructed throughout the country at the turn of the century. Characteristics of this style include storefronts marked by broad expanses of glass and framed by columns or piers, round- and segmental-arched windows, horizontal stringcourses, flat rooflines, and projecting cornices. Exuberant ornamentation, such as an elaborately shaped pediment with finials, moldings and classical motifs, is commonly found on more prominent buildings or buildings located within the central business district.

Employing such decorative elements provided a means of distinguishing one's building from the surrounding urban fabric. The main facade, which is the point of contact between patron and product, was often used to create an image or advertisement that would lure customers to the merchandise within. Signs were utilized to great effect and included hanging and projecting signs, awning and rooftop signs and signs painted on glass windows, doors and transoms as well as walls. Danneman's Supermarket at 464-468 Edgewood Avenue and 467 Edgewood contain the Site's finest examples of painted wall signs. Danneman's, constructed as a market in 1909, has a multicolored sign on the two-story west facade which depicts a loaf of bread and reads "Reach for Southern Goodness." The two-story rectangular block at 467 Edgewood was constructed ca. 1910 and contains white painted wall signs on most street-facing expanses of brick. "BROWN HAYS" and "DEPARTMENT STORE" are painted on the north facade (photograph 18) with "BROWN HAYS COMPANY," "DEPARTMENT STORE," and "PARK YOUR CAR HERE/AND TAKE YOUR TIME" on the larger east elevation.

Signs such as these were common to the Edgewood Avenue commercial corridor, which during the early part of the twentieth century was largely composed of one- and two-story, rectangular brick buildings, considerably less exotic than their more high-style downtown counterparts.[116] Flat and shed roofs were concealed behind parapets with rear and side walls laid in common bond. These rear and side walls included

---

[116]The three-story second Grant Building of 1876, located at the corner of Marietta and Forsyth Streets, and the five-story Moore-Marsh Building of 1881, located at the corner of Edgewood Avenue and Pryor Street, combined elements of Italianate design with High Victorian Gothic decorative motifs. Both buildings have been demolished.

Photograph 18
467 Edgewood Avenue, former Brown Hays store

irregularly placed sash windows and were left unadorned. Walls were built to the property line in order to maximize the interior square footage or selling space. This led to the construction of buildings directly adjacent to one another and, by 1911, a continuous row of storefronts existed on the south side of Edgewood, between Boulevard and Daniel Street. By 1928, this row of storefronts extended west to Fitzgerald Street.[117]

Storefronts of one-story buildings include large plate-glass display windows at ground level with a central, sometimes recessed, entrance composed of double wood-and-glass doors and a multiple-light transom. This arrangement is framed with plain brick piers and capped with a parapet that features a stamped metal cornice or decorative brickwork. 482 Edgewood, for example, is a one-story commercial

[117]*City of Atlanta* (map), Construction Department, Fulton County, Georgia (Atlanta: City of Atlanta, 1930), 25; Insurance map of Atlanta (New York: Sanborn-Perris Map Company, 1911), 459.

building that was constructed in 1908 and used by a shoemaker, auto repair company, poultry company, and radio and television repair company. The main facade is essentially all glass and includes a central entrance flanked by four plate glass windows which are topped by a band of nine fixed lights. Decorative elements consist of a stamped metal cornice, a corbeled brick cornice, and a recessed brick panel that contains decorative brickwork. The double storefront at 443-445 Edgewood is another typical example (photograph 19).

The primary facades of two-story commercial buildings are more complex as these buildings often serve more than one function (photograph 20). The larger facades of these buildings also offer greater surface area to develop a decorative scheme. The symmetrical plate-glass display windows and recessed entrances are similar to those of the one-story commercial buildings, though access to the second floor, which usually contained living quarters, is placed between the storefront and a side pier. The second floors are distinguished from the first floors with stamped metal cornices and feature double and triple windows set within segmental or flat brick arches. Decorative brickwork is found throughout the upper facade and cornice. There are seven extant commercial buildings on Edgewood Avenue, dating from 1905 to 1915, which were constructed as duplexes. One was designed to house three businesses.

485 Edgewood Avenue, built by B. D. Watkins in 1908, is part of a row that spans four buildings from 483 to 493 Edgewood Avenue. This two-story, rectangular brick building exhibits many elements characteristic of early commercial architecture on Edgewood Avenue. The facade is essentially symmetrical with the recessed store entrance flanked by display windows, a second floor entrance placed to one side, and a prominent cornice capping the storefront. The second floor is punctuated with three double windows that are accented with rusticated stone sills and flat brick arches. The corbeled brick cornice is typical of the modest decorative schemes found on smaller buildings outside the city's central business district.

487-489 Edgewood, built by B. D. Watkins in 1909, is a duplex that exhibits an exterior organization similar to that of 485 Edgewood. The storefronts, in fact, are nearly identical, although the second level of each unit is composed of two triple windows and the brickwork on the upper facade and cornice is more elaborate. The Roane Building of 1906, at 537-541 Edgewood Avenue, is the Site's most richly decorated commercial building (photograph 21). The main facade of the second story is composed of two planes and is organized around a three-part, basket-arched window. Flanking sash windows are capped with flat brick arches and terra-cotta finials and egg-and-dart hoods. The uppermost part of the facade contains terra-cotta rondels in the upper corners that feature cornucopia and floral motifs, a corbeled upper facade, and the name and date of the building.

Photograph 19
443-445 Edgewood Avenue

Photograph 20
439-441 Edgewood Avenue

476-480 Edgewood Avenue, built by W. H. Roane in 1909, is the only building in the Site designed to house three businesses (photograph 22). All three stores front Edgewood, with the most prized retail space occupying the corner, fronting both Edgewood and Boulevard. This entrance is angled into the corner, which provides optimum street exposure and shelter from the overhanging upper story. The storefronts of 478 and 480 are designed, like others in the area, with large display windows flanking entrances and a stamped metal cornice above. The second story contains two double windows with round heads. These are set within a larger brick arch which features corbeled brick details and an oversize keystone. The upper facade is marked by a horizontal brick panel, corbeled brick brackets, and a rusticated stone cornice that lines the parapet.

The Edgewood Avenue commercial buildings constructed between 1939 and 1955 either lack the integrity to be considered eligible for listing or do not meet the fifty-year eligibility requirement. Ivie's Garage, 438-442 Edgewood Avenue, constructed in 1939, is the only Edgewood Avenue property that meets both the integrity and age criteria. Two properties, at 458 and 510 Edgewood Avenue, although slightly less than fifty years old, are exceptional local examples of styles and are thus eligible.

Public and Ecclesiastical Buildings

The Site contains a limited number of public and ecclesiastical buildings that date to the period of significance. Several historic structures have recently become public buildings associated with the administration of the Site, such as the Visitor Center at 522 Auburn Avenue. Other buildings, such as the Baptist Memorial Institute School, a school for black children located on the south side of Auburn Avenue at the east end of the Birth-Home Block, have been razed. Those buildings that survive include Atlanta Fire Station Number Six, Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church, and Ebenezer Baptist Church.

Fire Station Number Six is a two-story Romanesque Revival style building erected in 1894 at 37-39 Boulevard. It is one in a series of neighborhood station houses constructed from approximately 1890 to 1920. These are two-story, rectangular brick buildings with a shed roof and decorative parapet. Similar to commercial buildings of this period, side and rear walls are generally left plain with most of the decorative elements found on the main facade. At the first floor level, these facades are marked by pedestrian entrances, windows, and one or two arched engine bays. Second-story sash windows are grouped together above the engine bays. The Romanesque Revival and Italianate styles of architecture are often combined through elaborate brickwork that includes pilasters, corbels, panels, and door and window surrounds.

Photograph 21
537 Edgewood Avenue

Photograph 22
476-478 Edgewood Avenue

The Romanesque Revival design of Station Number Six is suggested by the wide brick arches which frame the single engine bay and the band of five arched, second-story windows above. This style is further characterized by the asymmetrically placed tower, which includes a date panel, and the machicolated cornice. The diaper-patterned frieze, found on both the Boulevard and Auburn Avenue elevations, is the most inventive example of the elaborate brickwork found throughout the building (photograph 23).

At 29 Boulevard, just south of the fire station, is a three-story building constructed in 1912 to house Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church and School. It was built under the leadership of Father Ignatius Lissner and was intended to serve the surrounding black community. The ground floor was designed as a church, the second floor housed the school, and the third floor contained the auditorium. Worship services are now conducted in a nonhistoric structure at 19 Boulevard.[118]

Photograph 23
Atlanta Fire Station Number Six, 37-39 Boulevard

[118]Ambrose, et al., Part I, 2-19.

Our Lady of Lourdes is a plain, hip-roofed building faced with stone at the first floor level and displaying English bond brickwork on the floors above. The exterior ornamentation is largely associated with the brick lintels and corbeled surrounds of the windows. The two- and three-part jalousie windows are probably not original. The first-floor sash windows feature flat stone arches.

Ebenezer Baptist Church, located at 407-413 Auburn Avenue, is part of a tradition of church building that existed in the Sweet Auburn community in the first decades of the twentieth century. Big Bethel A.M.E. Church of 1904 and 1924, located at 220 Auburn Avenue, Wheat Street Baptist Church of 1920-1923, located at 365 Auburn Avenue, and Ebenezer of 1914-1922, are substantial buildings erected by a prosperous black community and built in the popular styles of their day. That these buildings soar above Auburn Avenue suggests both their spiritual importance and their place in the early twentieth century Sweet Auburn skyline.

Ebenezer was designed in the Gothic Revival style of architecture. Popular in the United States as a residential style from 1840-1880, Gothic Revival remained a common choice for ecclesiastical buildings well into the twentieth century. Although Gothic forms never completely disappeared in English church architecture, Gothic reemerged as a style of architecture during the middle of the eighteenth century with the work of William Kent and Horace Walpole.[119] Nearly a century later, it was promoted in the United States by Alexander Jackson Davis. Its popularity increased, however, through the work of Andrew Jackson Downing, whose pattern books, *Cottage Residences, Rural Architecture and Landscape Gardening* of 1842 and *The Architecture of Country Houses* of 1850, circulated widely.[120] Lyndhurst, the Tarrytown, New York residence designed by Davis in 1838 and 1865, and Richard Upjohn's Trinity Church in New York City of 1839-1846 are among the most influential buildings of the period and include such elements as pointed-arched window openings, wall buttresses, towers, castellated parapets, and steeply pitched roofs. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, Upjohn's archeological approach to church design gave way to more eclectic church buildings. Later Gothic Revival churches include both traditional Gothic design elements, elements borrowed from other styles, and original motifs.

---

[119]William H. Pierson, Jr., *Technology and the Picturesque, the Corporate and the Early Gothic Styles,* vol. 2 of *American Buildings and Their Architects* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 100.

[120]Andrew Jackson Downing, *Cottage Residence, Rural Architecture and Landscape Gardening* (New York, 1842), and *The Architecture of Country Houses* (New York, 1850).

Ebenezer is a two-story, rectangular brick church with two large towers at each end of the Auburn Avenue facade (photograph 24). These towers flank a steeply pitched gable roof that contains two pairs of cross gables. The southernmost pair corresponds to a transept and contains a large, three-part Gothic window in each gable end. The brickwork at the lower level is covered with gray stucco and scored to resemble stone.

The main facade is essentially divided into three bays. The towers, which comprise the two outer bays, are buttressed at the first and second levels and contain stained glass and louvered lancet windows. Merlons are located in the corners of the tower parapets. The center bay contains the main entrance at ground level, three narrow, stained-glass windows at the second level, and a three-part Gothic window in the gable end.

Photograph 24
Ebenezer Baptist Church, 407-413 Auburn Avenue

Two-story buttresses divide the side elevations into nine bays, with the tower comprising the northernmost bay and the chancel expressed in the southernmost bay. These bays are punctuated at the lower level by segmental-arched windows with the second-floor bays marked by tall, stained-glass windows. Brick panels mark the division between the first and second floors.

The rear elevation has been largely obscured by a one-story, hip-roofed addition built in 1971. An oculus, located high in the gable end, remains visible. The two-story Education Building, constructed in 1956 and rehabilitated in 1971, similarly obscures the east elevation. Brick beltcourses, panels, corbels, and window hoods ornament the front and side elevations of Ebenezer and to a lesser extent the Education Building. Brick ornamentation of this type is common in public and commercial buildings throughout the Sweet Auburn community from the early part of the twentieth century through the 1930s.

The church auditorium is located at the second level, above the below-grade meeting hall. It is an open, rectangular space, with the pulpit and choir elevated on a platform and a balcony across the rear of the sanctuary. The walls are white plaster, and the pitched ceiling is pressed metal, also painted white. The gently sloped floor is oak and contains a central and two narrower side ranks of pews. Transepts feature stained glass portraits of Rev. A. D. Williams and Rev. Martin Luther King, Sr.

ASSOCIATED PROPERTIES AND PROPERTY TYPES

Associated property types for this context are residences and commercial buildings. Ebenezer Baptist Church, Our Lady of Lourdes, and Atlanta Fire Station Number Six are unique properties considered under this context. Physical characteristics of these property types and properties have been detailed above. The associative characteristics of individual properties are determined by how well they represent the building types and architectural styles outlined above. Judgments concerning associative characteristics involve a consideration of original design and workmanship, as well as the integrity of each resource.

As examples of vernacular architecture, Site buildings have significance under National Register Criterion C for design/ construction, if they "embody distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction"[121] and possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Buildings within the Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site are eligible if they

---

[121] *National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1991), 17.

have local significance for design or construction and possess sufficient integrity. A description of each Site building is included in Appendix B of this study.

Registration Requirements/Integrity

Site building evaluations are based on the degree to which they either embody the pattern of features that defines each building type described above or represent an individual variation within the broader type. Integrity is a key component in the evaluations of eligibility. All buildings possess integrity of location since no buildings within the Site have been moved. Integrity of setting varies from property to property, depending on the alteration of the immediate landscape. However, on the whole, the Birth-Home block and the Edgewood Avenue corridor maintain a high degree of setting integrity since the historic streetscapes and residential landscapes are intact. Few modern intrusions are present. Lists of eligible and ineligible buildings appear below. Buildings determined ineligible because of a lack of integrity and two buildings that are exceptions to the usual fifty-year requirement are discussed in this section.

A number of Site properties are not eligible because they have lost integrity. A fire severely damaged 18 Howell Street, leaving gaping holes in the walls and destroying its integrity. The duplex at 479-481 Old Wheat, which has been converted to a single-family residence and has a wholly reconstructed porch, also lacks sufficient integrity. The duplex at 492-494 Edgewood is not eligible because virtually all of its historic fabric was replaced in a reconstruction. Under the criteria consideration governing reconstructed properties, a reconstruction is eligible only if it is accurately executed, the building is presented as part of a restoration master plan, and no other building with the same associations survives. Because numerous other residential properties on the Birth-Home block carry the same associative values, 492-494 Edgewood is ineligible.

The facade ornamentation and storefronts are the primary architectural features of the commercial buildings on Edgewood Avenue. Where facades and storefronts have been substantially altered, integrity no longer exists. Alterations to 462 Edgewood Avenue have left little trace of the original storefront, making the building ineligible. The filling station at 479 Edgewood is not eligible because it has lost its canopy and other architectural details. The original storefront of 484 Edgewood has been replaced by a contemporary glass and metal facade, making the building not eligible. This is also the case with 513 Edgewood, where a remodeling has left no trace of the original facade and fenestration.

Two Site properties are eligible although they do not meet the fifty-year requirement, because they are of exceptional importance for local architecture as defined under Criteria Consideration G. 458 Edgewood, built in 1946, is an

exceptional example of the Art Moderne style, rarely used for commercial buildings in Atlanta. Additionally, the building is an early example of a drive-up business. The building retains its round windows, canopy with metal coping, and streamlined appearance. 510 Edgewood Avenue (1947) is an outstanding early Atlanta example of International style architecture. International style elements include ribbon windows, horizontal lines, and a composition of simple rectangular masses. These two buildings fail to meet the fifty-year rule by four and five years, respectively, and are eligible because they are exceptional examples of styles uncommon in Atlanta.

ELIGIBLE PROPERTIES—LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE

Residential Buildings

Georgian Cottage with Italianate Elements

521 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1886)
521-1/2 Auburn Avenue, store building (ca. 1920)

Double Shotgun Houses

472-474 Auburn Avenue (1905)
476-478 Auburn Avenue (1905)
480-482 Auburn Avenue (1905)
484-486 Auburn Avenue (1905)
488 Auburn Avenue (1905)
53-55 Boulevard (1905)
483-485 Old Wheat Street (1905)
487-489 Old Wheat Street (1905)
493 Auburn Avenue, Rear, Units 1-6 (1911)

Single-Family Houses with Queen Anne Elements

497 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1900)
Birth Home, 501 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1894)
503 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1895)
510 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1890) and back yard wall
514 Auburn Avenue (1893) and side yard wall
518 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1893)
522 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1894) and side yard wall
526 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1895)
530 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1895) and side yard wall (ca. 1895-1945)

535 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1895)
550 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1890)

Vernacular Houses and Apartment Buildings

491-493 Auburn Avenue (1911)
506 Auburn Avenue (1933)
515 Auburn Avenue (1909)
540 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1890)
546 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1890)
53 Hogue Street (ca. 1940)
14 Howell Street (ca. 1927)
24 Howell Street (ca. 1895)
28 Howell Street (ca. 1895)
54 Howell Street (ca. 1931)

Commercial Buildings

420 Edgewood Avenue (1912)
438-442 Edgewood Avenue (1939)
439-441 Edgewood Avenue (1920)
443-445 Edgewood Avenue (1909)
444-446 Edgewood Avenue (1909)
447 Edgewood Avenue (1909)
451 Edgewood Avenue (1915)
458 Edgewood Avenue (1946)
464-468 Edgewood Avenue (1909)
467 Edgewood Avenue (1911)
476-480 Edgewood Avenue (1909)
482 Edgewood Avenue (1908)
483 Edgewood Avenue (1908)
485 Edgewood Avenue (1908)
487 Edgewood Avenue (1909)
488 Edgewood Avenue (1909)
489 Edgewood Avenue (1909)
510 Edgewood Avenue (1947)
541 Edgewood Avenue (1906)

Public and Ecclesiastical Buildings

Ebenezer Baptist Church, 407-413 Auburn Avenue (1914-1922)
Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church, 29 Boulevard (1912)
Atlanta Fire Station Number Six, 37-39 Boulevard (1894)

NONELIGIBLE PROPERTIES

492-494 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1897)
421-429 Edgewood Avenue (1946)
462 Edgewood Avenue (1927)
479 Edgewood Avenue (1932)
484 Edgewood Avenue (1908)
513 Edgewood Avenue (1920)
525 Edgewood Avenue (1948)
536 Edgewood Avenue (1951)
18 Howell Street (1927)
479-481 Old Wheat Street (1905)

CHAPTER 4

EXPANSION OF THE SITE BOUNDARY

On October 30, 1992, the boundary of the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site was expanded in an effort to accomplish several goals. The additional acreage (boundary expansion area) will accommodate off-street parking lots for the increasing number of visitors to the Site. Within the boundary expansion area is the Martin Luther King, Jr., Community Center, which NPS contemplates acquiring and converting to a visitor center. Finally, subject to the negotiation of appropriate agreements and successful fund-raising by the congregation, a portion of the new acreage will be made available to Ebenezer Baptist Church for the construction of a new place of worship. For some time, Ebenezer's auditorium has been unable to accommodate all who wish to attend services and programs there. If the congregation can build a new auditorium, this will relieve the pressure to enlarge or modify the historic church structure, with its strong associations to Dr. King, and permit expanded NPS interpretation at the existing church building.

The expanded Site boundary extends north from Auburn Avenue to the rear property lines of the parcels lying on the north side of Cain Street. The east side of Jackson Street forms the west boundary line. The west side of Boulevard and the west property lines of 70 Boulevard and 200 Auburn Avenue form the east boundary. Currently, NPS plans to demolish most or all standing structures within the boundary expansion area, except 412 Houston Street, which will be adapted for use as a new maintenance facility.

Fifteen industrial and commercial buildings are located within the boundary expansion area. Most are remnants of Atlanta's early-twentieth-century urbanization. Devastated by fire in 1917, this area was rebuilt as a residential, commercial, and industrial district. By 1923, substantial single-family residences lined Boulevard, and three industrial concerns bordered this residential community. As additional manufacturing and industrial enterprises replaced the residences along the main avenues, multiple dwellings and apartment flats clustered around interior alleys. This area extended black residential and commercial occupancy beyond Auburn Avenue.

During the 1950s, the entire Auburn Avenue community experienced economic decline. Some industrial concerns, such as Scripto, Inc., continued to expand. Many more affluent residents relocated, some moving to more fashionable west-side neighborhoods. By 1965, not a single residence remained within the boundary expansion area. Industrial and manufacturing concerns were affected by this decline as well. In 1977, Scripto relocated to suburban Gwinnett County, further destabilizing the community.

Many of the boundary expansion area's fifteen commercial and industrial buildings are currently unoccupied and in disrepair. The interior alleys are no longer discernable, and streetscapes are defined by the vacant lots separating most structures. Only part of one building remains on the north side of Cain Street, for example, where construction of the Presidential Parkway has hastened the destruction of buildings on that side of the street.

List of Classified Structures and Georgia SHPO architectural survey forms were completed for all boundary expansion area properties considered potentially eligible for the National Register under Criterion C. The Martin Luther King, Jr., National Register Historic District extends as far north as Auburn Avenue and, east of Boulevard, to Irwin Street. The boundary expansion area was excluded from the original district nomination because its integrity was compromised by the earlier removal of period structures, leaving discontinuous remnants intact. Because they are not part of a district, the boundary expansion area properties were evaluated under the criteria established for individual and multiple property nominations. None of these properties was found to meet the minimum requirements for National Register eligibility under Criterion C. Three properties do not meet the 50-year requirement. No structure is the work of a master and none possesses high artistic merit. The structures also do not embody distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, because all properties have problems of integrity relating to design, setting, feeling, or association. A description of each of the surveyed properties follows:

130 BOULEVARD, 1920-1923. A two-story, brick industrial building with a shed roof, decorative brick parapet, and brick pilasters. The one-story, two-bay addition to the north matches in both style and building materials.

442 CAIN STREET, 1929. A one-story, trapezoid-shaped, brick service station with a shed roof, stepped parapet, and skylight. Facade features a single service bay with double, cross-braced doors and a three-bay office.

409 HOUSTON, 1923-1928. A one-story, trapezoid-shaped, brick-and-concrete-block industrial building with a gable roof and two, large saw-tooth skylights. Formerly a laundry, the large open factory retains original features.

412 HOUSTON STREET, 1920-1923. A one-story, shed-roofed brick industrial building with a two-story, shed-roofed office tower at the NW corner. Decorative brickwork and awning, milled newel post and wainscoting remain.

423 HOUSTON STREET, 1931. A two-story, gable-roofed, brick industrial building with gable-roofed end pavilions featuring terra-cotta door surrounds. One-and-two-story structures have been added on the south and east sides.

450 HOUSTON STREET, ca. 1923. A two-story, shed-roofed, trapezoid-shaped, brick commercial building with a three-part facade defined by four brick piers. Brick panels exist above the storefront and below the parapet.

456-460 HOUSTON STREET, 1948. A one-story, trapezoid-shaped, concrete-block commercial building with a shed roof and stepped parapet. The facade contains two three-part storefronts.

466 HOUSTON STREET, 1946. A one-story, trapezoidal-shaped, brick commercial building with a shed roof which supports three, large billboards. A corner storefront is located on Boulevard with a second on Houston Street.

454 IRWIN STREET, 1946. A two-story, rectangular-shaped, concrete-block industrial building with a gable roof and stepped gable ends. A concrete ramp rises to the steel-decked second story.

CHAPTER 5

MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

The nationally significant or contributing historic resources within the Site are primarily located on the Birth-Home Block. These resources should be managed so that the period of significance, 1929 to 1941, is represented as accurately as present knowledge of historic conditions allows. The Birth-Home Block was the residence of blacks of varying economic status during a period of national economic hardship. The historic appearance of the neighborhood reflected high density development and a great variety in income level. Management of resources should reflect the methods employed by the residents to upgrade and maintain their homes, often within limited means, and the diversity of housing types. For example, the alley duplexes behind 493 Auburn Avenue are the last remnants, within the Site, of a formerly common residential spatial arrangement and housing type. During the period of significance, large numbers of inexpensive multiple-family dwellings, often on alleys, were constructed in Atlanta to accommodate working-class blacks. These resources are important because they represent the intensive land use and crowding that characterized the Auburn Avenue black community. The store building at 521-1/2 Auburn is the last survivor of at least six outbuilding-stores known to have been in operation on the Birth-Home Block during King's residence. The garage/shed at 497 Auburn is the last surviving back yard outbuilding. Both are thus important resources that should be maintained and interpreted. Other elements of the physical environment important to an accurate interpretation of King's boyhood include: exterior plumbing and vent pipes, retaining walls, fences, sidewalks, and front and rear yards. For management recommendations concerning landscape features on the Birth-Home Block refer to "Cultural Landscape Report: Birth-Home Block, Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site, 1929-1941."

As recommended in the Site's General Management Plan, all the historic resources on the Birth-Home Block should have the facades restored and the interiors rehabilitated for adaptive reuse. Any delay in stabilization or rehabilitation of historic resources further jeopardizes their material condition. Most notably, two double

shotguns on Old Wheat Street, currently vacant and in deteriorated condition, may be lost without prompt stabilization. Those historic buildings on the Birth-Home Block already rehabilitated should be maintained to present a streetscape that accurately reflects the period of significance. Most buildings on the Birth-Home Block are residences and should be maintained as residences through tenant lease agreements. Fire Station Number Six is one notable exception. Currently, stabilization is occurring on the building and rehabilitation should be completed promptly to avoid further deterioration of the historic resource.

Ebenezer Baptist Church is the only nationally significant historic Site resource that directly relates to the Civil Rights Movement. NPS should pursue cooperative agreements with Ebenezer's congregation to encourage maintenance, stabilization, and appropriate rehabilitation. To facilitate maintenance and rehabilitation, a Historic Structure Report should be prepared for Ebenezer. Additionally, research needs to be done in the King Center archives to identify more precisely King's and SCLC's activities at Ebenezer from 1957 to 1968.

The historic resources along Edgewood Avenue are marginally linked to the Site's primary significance, because the relationship between the Auburn Avenue black community and the white-owned and operated businesses on Edgewood was probably limited. However, the Edgewood Avenue corridor, composed chiefly of locally significant examples of early twentieth century commercial buildings, supplies a largely historic buffer on the south side of the Birth-Home Block. Therefore, preservation easements and facade restoration, through private or City of Atlanta efforts, should be encouraged by Site management. Significant deterioration and loss of the historic structures along Edgewood Avenue threaten the integrity of the Birth-Home Block, because inappropriate private development within view of the Birth Home would visually intrude. Site management should also participate in planning for corridor improvements along Auburn and Edgewood to ensure that any city-funded improvements do not compromise the historic integrity of the Site and Preservation District.

Several buildings constructed before 1943 are located along Houston and Jackson within the boundary expansion area. Although none of these buildings was found eligible for the National Register, Site management may wish to consider adaptive reuse of sound structures in future development plans.

Interpretation of the Site, including exhibits, publications, and staff interpretation, should focus on the 1929 to 1941 period of the King family's residence on Auburn Avenue. Interpretive programs should also draw connections between the historic Auburn Avenue black community and King's subsequent civil rights activism. Ebenezer Baptist Church is the key Site resource for interpretation of the Civil Rights

Movement. The interpretive program at Ebenezer could be expanded to include mention of the rally he held there in support of the Scripto strike.

Finally, to link the Site and the Preservation District, interpretive programs and exhibits within the Site should emphasize the larger geographical and social interaction between the Auburn Avenue community and the city, particularly in the areas of urban growth and segregation policies. The Site's national significance, as both the birthplace of a significant black leader and as a crucible of the Civil Rights Era, should be interpreted concurrently.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Auburn Avenue Community

Alexander, Robert J. "Negro Business in Atlanta, 1894-1950," *Southern Economic Journal* 27 (1950): 451-64.

Ambrose, Andy, Vincent Fort, Alexa Henderson, Dean Rowley, Carole Stevens, Barbara Tagger. *Historic Resource Study, Auburn Avenue Community of Atlanta, 1865-1930* (Draft). Atlanta, n.d.

Atlanta City Directories. Atlanta: various publishers, 1880-1930. In collection of Atlanta Historical Society.

Garrett, Franklin M. *Atlanta and Its Environs: A Chronicle of Its People and Events.* 2 vols. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1969.

Henderson, Alexa, and Eugene Walker. *Sweet Auburn: The Thriving Hub of Black Atlanta, 1900-1960.* Denver: National Park Service, 1983.

Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site Cultural Landscape Report: The Birth-Home Block. Atlanta: National Park Service, Southeast Regional Office, unpublished draft, 1993.

National Negro Business League. *1937 Directory and Souvenir Program.* No place of publication, n.d.

"National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form, Martin Luther King, Jr., Historic District." May 2, 1974.

O'Neal, Malinda King, editor. *Ebenezer, A Centennial Time Capsule, 1886-1986.* Atlanta: Ebenezer Baptist Church, n.d.

Porter, Michael Leroy. "Black Atlanta: An Interdisciplinary Study of Blacks on the East Side of Atlanta, 1890-1930." Ph.D. dissertation, Emory University, 1974.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. New York: Sanborn-Perris Map Company, 1899-1932.

White, Dana F. "The Black Sides of Atlanta: A Geography of Expansion and Containment, 1870-1970." *The Atlanta Historical Journal* 26 (Summer/Fall 1982):199-225.

Wright, C. T. "The Development of Public Schools for Blacks in Atlanta." *The Atlanta Historical Journal* 26 (Spring 1977):115-28.

BLACK HISTORY/SOUTHERN HISTORY

Franklin, John Hope. *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of Negro Americans*, 3d ed. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967.

Franklin, John Hope, and Alfred A. Moss, Jr. *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of Negro Americans.* 6th ed. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988.

Roller, David C. and Robert W. Twyman, eds. *The Encyclopedia of Southern History.* Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979.

Wingo, Horace C. "Race Relations in Georgia, 1872-1908." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Georgia, 1969.

Woodward, C. Vann. *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913.* Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1951.

_____. *The Strange Career of Jim Crow.* 3d revised ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1974.

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., AND THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

Abernathy, Ralph David. *And the Walls Came Tumbling Down.* New York: Harper & Row, 1989.

Baldwin, Lewis V. *There is a Balm in Gilead: The Cultural Roots of Martin Luther King, Jr.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991.

"Bargaining Session to Be Held by Scripto and Union," *Atlanta Daily World,* Dec. 20, 1964.

Branch, Taylor. *Parting the Water: America in the King Years, 1954-1963.* New York: Touchstone, 1989.

"'Breadbasket' Asks Boycott of Scripto," *Atlanta Journal,* Dec. 10, 1964.

Carlson, G. S. "Must Fight for Better Jobs, King Tells 250 Scripto Strikers," *Atlanta Constitution,* Dec. 21, 1964.

Cashman, Sean Dennis. *African-Americans and the Quest for Civil Rights, 1900-1990.* New York: New York University Press, 1991.

"Christmas Bonus Paid, Strikers Suspend Boycott of Scripto," *Atlanta Daily World,* Dec. 25, 1964.

Fairclough, Adam. *To Redeem the Soul of America: The Southern Christian Leadership Conference and Martin Luther King, Jr.* Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1987.

Garrow, David J. *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.* New York: Morrow, 1986.

Greene, Tom. "Negro Chiefs Back Strike at Scripto," *Atlanta Journal,* Nov. 30, 1964.

"King Addresses Group Today on Current Strike," *Atlanta Daily World,* Dec. 1, 1964.

King, Coretta Scott. *My Life with Martin Luther King, Jr.* New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969.

King, Martin Luther, Jr. *Stride Toward Freedom: the Montgomery Story.* 1958. Reprint. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986.

"King Pickets Scripto Plant 30 Minutes," *Atlanta Journal,* Dec. 20, 1964.

Lewis, David L. *King: A Biography.* 2d edition. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978.

Oates, Stephen B. *Let the Trumpet Sound: The Life of Martin Luther King, Jr.* New York: Mentor, 1985.

"Scripto Gives 900 Pay Hike," *Atlanta Journal,* Jan. 20, 1965.

"Scripto, Union Meeting Today," *Atlanta Daily World,* Dec. 3, 1964.

"Strikers Meet Tuesday; Hear Pledge of Support," *Atlanta Daily World,* Dec. 2, 1964.

Troop, Paul, and Ann Woolner. "Scripto Moves Plant to Suburbs," *Atlanta Journal,* Dec. 20, 1977.

Tyson, Remer. "Union's Bias Charge False, Scripto Says," *Atlanta Constitution,* Dec. 23, 1964.

Walker, James. "SCLC Joins in Scripto Walkout," *Atlanta Journal,* Dec. 2, 1964.

Architecture/Preservation

Atlanta Urban Design Commission. *Atlanta's Lasting Landmarks.* Atlanta: Atlanta Urban Design Commission, 1987.

Blumenson, John J.-G. *Identifying American Architecture: A Pictorial Guide to the Styles.* 2d ed. Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1981.

Catalog of Historic Structures, Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site and Preservation District. Atlanta: National Park Service, 1983.

Downing, Andrew Jackson. *The Architecture of Country Houses.* New York, 1850.

_____. *Cottage Residences, Rural Architecture and Landscape Gardening.* New York, 1842.

Foley, Mary Mix. *The American House.* New York: Harper & Row, 1980.

"Georgia Historic Resources Survey Manual." Atlanta: Historic Preservation Section, Parks and Historic Sites Divisions, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, n.d.

Georgia's Living Places: Historic Houses in Their Landscaped Settings. Atlanta: Historic Preservation Section, Division of Parks, Recreation & Historic Sites, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, 1991.

"Historic Structure Report: The Martin Luther King Birth Home, Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site, Atlanta, Georgia (Draft)." Denver: Denver Service Center, National Park Service, n.d.

History and Prehistory in the National Park System and the National Historic Landmarks Program. Washington, D.C.: History Division, National Park Service, 1987.

Hitchcock, Henry-Russell. *Architecture: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries.* Harmondsworth, England: Penguin, 1987.

Liebs, Chester H. *Main Street to Miracle Mile: American Roadside Architecture.* Boston: Little Brown, 1985.

Longstreth, Richard. *The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture.* Washington, D.C.: Preservation Press, 1987.

McAlester, Virginia, and Lee McAlester. *A Field Guide to American Houses.* New York: Knopf, 1984.

National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation. Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1991.

National Register Bulletin 16B: How to Complete the National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form. Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1991.

Pierson, William H., Jr., *Technology and the Picturesque, the Corporate and Early Gothic Styles.* Vol. 2 of *American Buildings and Their Architects.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.

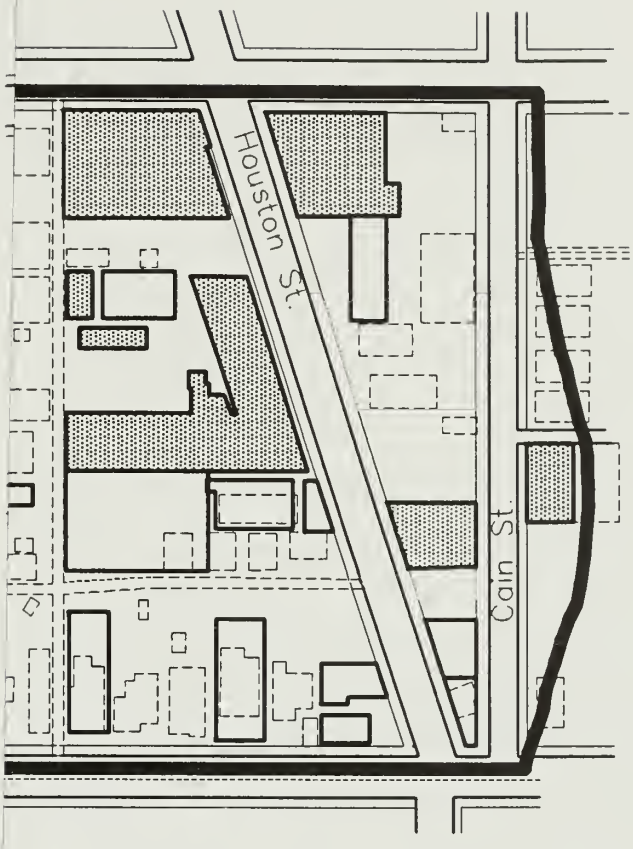
Rifkind, Carole. *A Field Guide to American Architecture.* New York: New American Library, 1980.

The Shotgun House. Louisville: Preservation Alliance of Louisville and Jefferson County, 1980.

Toledano, Roulhac, Sally Kittredge Evans, and Mary Louise Christovich. "Types and Styles." In *New Orleans Architecture*, vol. IV. Gretna, Louisiana: Pelican Publishing, 1974.

Vlach, John Michael. "The Shotgun House: An African Architectural Legacy." In *Common Places: Readings in American Vernacular Architecture*, edited by Dell Upton and John Michael Vlach. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986.

Appendix A
Historical Base Map

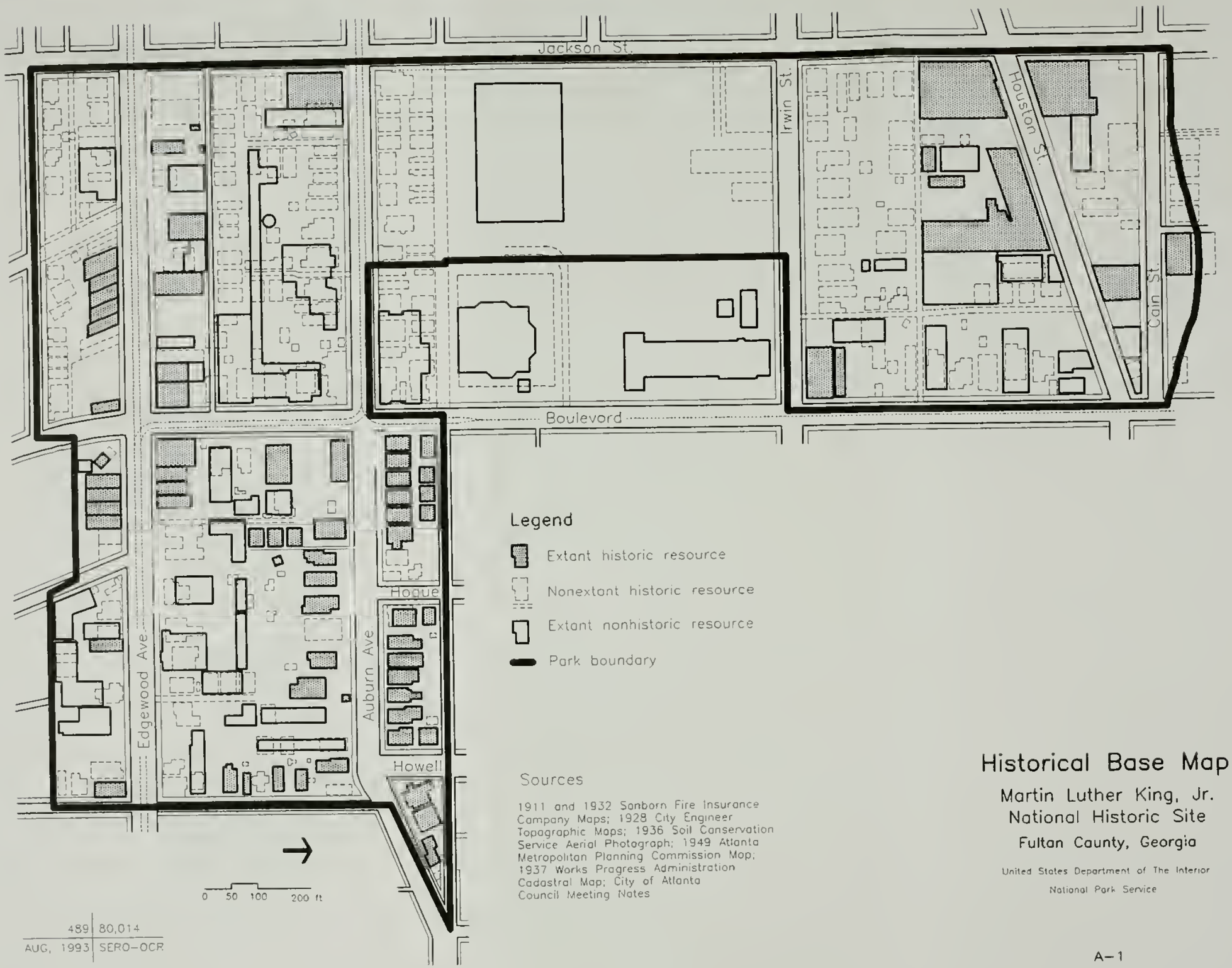


Historical Base Map

Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site

Fulton County, Georgia

United States Department of The Interior
National Park Service



Legend

- Extant historic resource
- Nonextant historic resource
- Extant nonhistoric resource
- Park boundary

Sources

1911 and 1932 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Maps; 1928 City Engineer Topographic Maps; 1936 Soil Conservation Service Aerial Photograph; 1949 Atlanta Metropolitan Planning Commission Map; 1937 Works Progress Administration Cadastral Map; City of Atlanta Council Meeting Notes

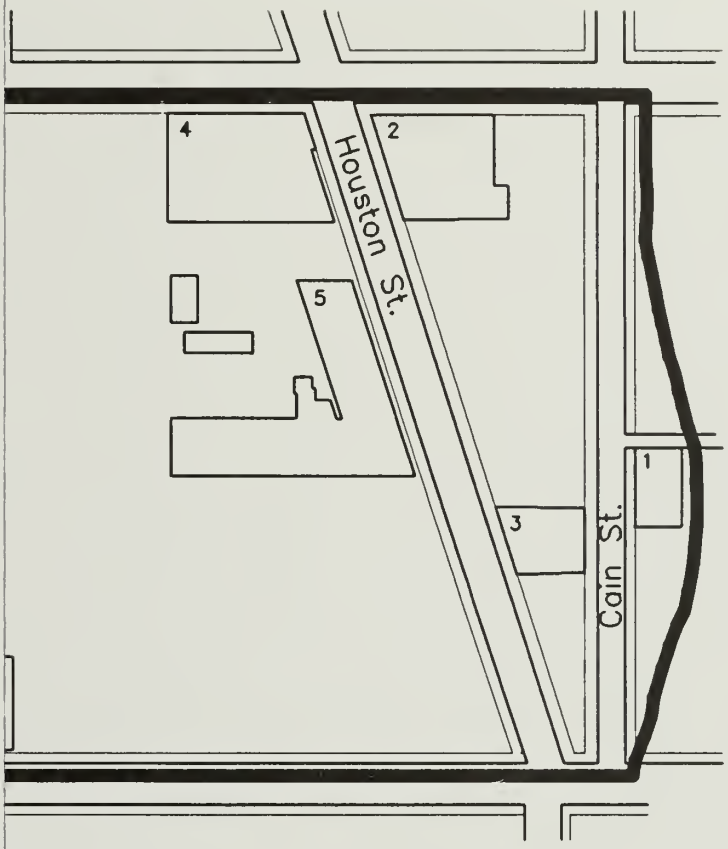
Historical Base Map

Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site

Fulton County, Georgia

United States Department of The Interior
National Park Service

A–1



(Our Lady of Lourdes
urn Ave.
Ave.
Ave. (Martin Luther
, Birth Home)
Ave.
Ave.
2 Auburn Ave.
Ave. (Harper House)
Ave., Rear, No. 1–2
Ave., Rear, No. 3–4
Ave., Rear, No. 5–6
.
.
.
.
d Ave.
d Ave. (Ivy's Garage)
gewood Ave.

50. 462–468 Edgewood Ave. (Danneman's Grocery)
51. 476–480 Edgewood Ave.
52. 482 Edgewood Ave.
53. 484 Edgewood Ave.
54. 488 Edgewood Ave.
55. 439–441 Edgewood Ave.
56. 443 Edgewood Ave.
57. 445 Edgewood Ave.
58. 447 Edgewood Ave.
59. 451 Edgewood Ave.
60. 467 Edgewood Ave.
61. 479 Edgewood Ave.
62. 483 Edgewood Ave.
63. 485 Edgewood Ave.
64. 487 Edgewood Ave.
65. 489 Edgewood Ave.
66. 513 Edgewood Ave.
67. 541 Edgewood Ave. (Roane Bldg.)

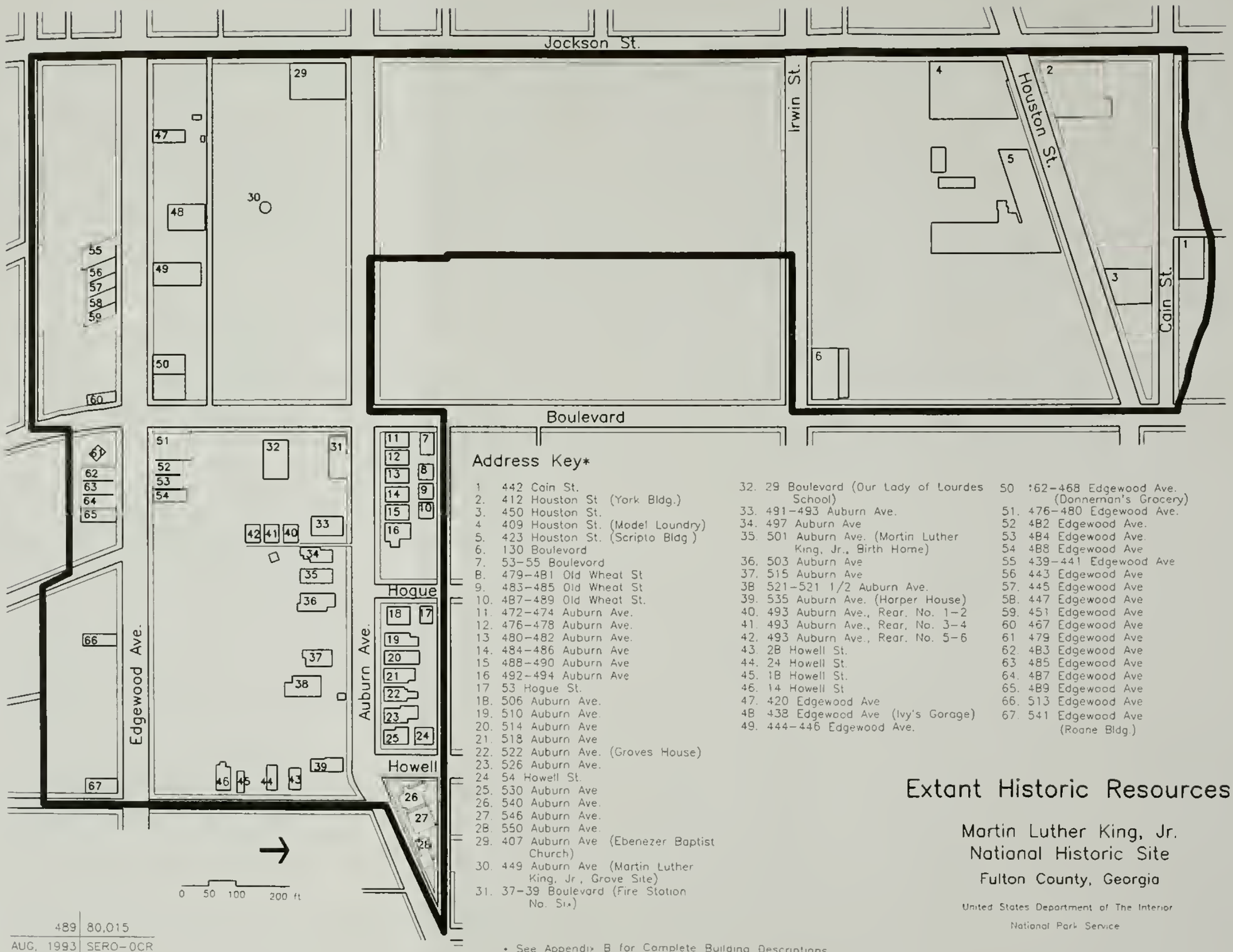
Extant Historic Resources

Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site

Fulton County, Georgia

United States Department of The Interior
National Park Service

A–2



Address Key*

1. 442 Cain St.
2. 412 Houston St (York Bldg.)
3. 450 Houston St.
4. 409 Houston St. (Model Laundry)
5. 423 Houston St. (Scripto Bldg.)
6. 130 Boulevard
7. 53–55 Boulevard
8. 479–481 Old Wheat St
9. 483–485 Old Wheat St
10. 487–489 Old Wheat St.
11. 472–474 Auburn Ave.
12. 476–478 Auburn Ave.
13. 480–482 Auburn Ave.
14. 484–486 Auburn Ave
15. 488–490 Auburn Ave
16. 492–494 Auburn Ave
17. 53 Hogue St.
18. 506 Auburn Ave.
19. 510 Auburn Ave.
20. 514 Auburn Ave
21. 518 Auburn Ave
22. 522 Auburn Ave. (Groves House)
23. 526 Auburn Ave.
24. 54 Howell St.
25. 530 Auburn Ave
26. 540 Auburn Ave.
27. 546 Auburn Ave.
28. 550 Auburn Ave.
29. 407 Auburn Ave (Ebenezer Baptist Church)
30. 449 Auburn Ave (Martin Luther King, Jr., Grove Site)
31. 37–39 Boulevard (Fire Station No. 31)
32. 29 Boulevard (Our Lady of Lourdes School)
33. 491–493 Auburn Ave.
34. 497 Auburn Ave
35. 501 Auburn Ave. (Martin Luther King, Jr., Birth Home)
36. 503 Auburn Ave
37. 515 Auburn Ave
38. 521–521 1/2 Auburn Ave.
39. 535 Auburn Ave. (Harper House)
40. 493 Auburn Ave., Rear, No. 1–2
41. 493 Auburn Ave., Rear, No. 3–4
42. 493 Auburn Ave., Rear, No. 5–6
43. 28 Howell St.
44. 24 Howell St.
45. 18 Howell St.
46. 14 Howell St
47. 420 Edgewood Ave
48. 438 Edgewood Ave (Ivy's Garage)
49. 444–446 Edgewood Ave.
50. 462–468 Edgewood Ave. (Donnerman's Grocery)
51. 476–480 Edgewood Ave.
52. 482 Edgewood Ave.
53. 484 Edgewood Ave.
54. 488 Edgewood Ave
55. 439–441 Edgewood Ave
56. 443 Edgewood Ave
57. 445 Edgewood Ave
58. 447 Edgewood Ave
59. 451 Edgewood Ave
60. 467 Edgewood Ave
61. 479 Edgewood Ave
62. 483 Edgewood Ave
63. 485 Edgewood Ave
64. 487 Edgewood Ave
65. 489 Edgewood Ave
66. 513 Edgewood Ave
67. 541 Edgewood Ave (Roane Bldg.)

* See Appendix B for Complete Building Descriptions

489	80,015
AUG. 1993	SERO–OCR

Extant Historic Resources

Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site

Fulton County, Georgia

United States Department of The Interior
National Park Service

Appendix B
Building Descriptions

407-413 Auburn Avenue, 1914-1922. Ebenezer Baptist Church is a two-story, rectangular, brick, Gothic Revival church with a gable roof and two large towers flanking the main elevation. The lower level, which contains the meeting hall, is covered with gray stucco and scored to resemble stone. Two-story buttresses divide the side elevations into nine bays containing stained-glass lancet windows. Brick beltcourses, panels, corbels, and window hoods ornament the front and side elevations. The auditorium is an open, rectangular space, with the pulpit and choir elevated on a platform and a balcony across the rear of the sanctuary. The education building was constructed in 1956; in 1971, a new front was placed on it.

449 Auburn Avenue, 1976. The Martin Luther King, Jr., grave site consists of a large white marble sarcophagus with a stepped base and a projecting cap. The sarcophagus is sited on a circular island in a pool, which is part of a memorial plaza that incorporates cascading pools, a fountain, and the Freedom Walk, a barrel-vaulted arcade. The narrow end of the sarcophagus, which faces Auburn Avenue, carries the inscription, "REV. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR./1929-1968/Free at Last, Free at Last/Thank God Almighty/I'm Free at Last."

472-474, 476-478, 480-[482]* and 484-[486] Auburn Avenue, 1905. Four identical hip-roofed double shotgun houses with weatherboard siding that have been rehabilitated by the NPS. Each unit of each duplex has a hip-roofed entry porch with turned posts, sawn brackets, and a plain stick balustrade. After rehabilitation, 472-474 and 476-478 remained duplexes, while 480-482 and 484-486 were converted to single-family residences. The rehabilitation connected the decks of the separate front porches on each unit.

488-[490] Auburn Avenue, 1905. Hip-roofed double shotgun house with weatherboard siding. Parallel hip-roofed porches have turned posts, sawn brackets, and a plain stick balustrade. NPS rehabilitation, which will convert structure to a single-family house, was ongoing at time of survey.

492-[494] Auburn Avenue, ca. 1897. Constructed as a duplex, this building has parallel front-facing gable roofs and a gabled-ell addition on the east. A porch with turned posts, sawn brackets, and a stick balustrade extends across the front of the

---

*Street numbers no longer used, as with duplexes that have been converted to single-family residences, are indicated in brackets.

house and the addition. Existing structure is a reconstruction of a severely deteriorated building and is now a single-family residence.

491-[493] Auburn Avenue, 1911. A small, rectangular-plan apartment building with a hip roof and a recessed, two-story, full-facade porch. The building has square porch posts and exposed rafter ends. Asbestos siding now sheaths the building, presumably covering original weatherboards.

493 Auburn Avenue, rear, units 1-6, 1911. Three identical two-room-deep double shotguns are on an alley behind the Birth Block. Each has a hip roof, a combined front porch with turned posts, milled brackets, and a shed roof.

497 Auburn Avenue, ca. 1900. A two-story, single-family house with Queen Anne elements. The house has a hip roof with a front-facing cross gable and an addition at the rear. The one-story full-facade porch has a wide entablature with dentils and a stick balustrade, while the gable end features a sunburst motif, decorative shingles and a double vent. In the back yard is a small frame storage shed, oriented 45 degrees from the lot line, built circa 1933-1935.

501 Auburn Avenue, ca. 1894. This two-story, single-family home, the birthplace of Martin Luther King, Jr., was restored by the NPS. The house incorporates a number of Queen Anne stylistic elements: irregular massing, a side entrance, a hip roof with lower cross gables, decorative shingles in the gable ends, and a wrap-around porch with turned posts, milled brackets, and a plain, openwork balustrade.

503 Auburn Avenue, ca. 1895. A two-story house with Queen Anne elements. The house features a hip roof with a front-facing gable and an addition at the rear. Beneath the shingle-clad gable end is a three-sided cutaway bay with a jigsawn panel at the second story. A one-story porch supported on brick piers and square columns runs across the facade. One pier lacks a post, which may originally have been present. The front yard has five granite steps leading to the house from the sidewalk, built ca. 1895-1915.

506 Auburn Avenue, 1933. A plain, four-unit apartment building that may have been built as a duplex. The building has a hip roof and a recessed, two-story, full-facade porch carried on brick piers and square posts.

510 Auburn Avenue, ca. 1890. A two-story house with a hip roof, a front-facing gable over a cutaway bay, and a single-story, full-facade porch. Surviving Queen Anne features include turned porch posts and sawn brackets, a diamond-shaped window next to the main entrance, and decorative shingles in the gable end. Alterations include asphalt siding over weatherboards, an exterior stair to the second floor on the west, boarded up windows, and probable removal of brackets over the cutaway bay. In the back yard is an eighteen-inch-high, thirty-foot-long rubble stone wall running parallel to back lot line, built ca. 1895-1945.

514 Auburn Avenue, 1893. A two-story house with Queen Anne elements, possibly converted from a single-family to a duplex at an early point in its history. Rehabilitated by the NPS, the house retains decorative trusswork and a circular vent in the gable end and has two additions at the rear. Two-story, full-facade porch with fluted posts. Along the east property line is brick and stone wall with a partial stucco finish, built ca. 1895-1945. The wall ranges from two to four feet in height.

515 Auburn Avenue, 1909. A vernacular gabled-ell house, with several additions, that was converted from a single-family residence to a duplex. The roof is complex with two hipped portions and a front-facing gable. The wraparound porch displays Tuscan columns.

518 Auburn Avenue, ca. 1893. A two-story house with Queen Anne elements. Two front-facing gables project from the hip roof. The western gabled projection is probably an addition, and a three-sided cutaway bay is beneath the eastern gable end. Both gable ends have decorative shingles, horseshoe-shaped vents, and pent eaves. One-story, full-facade porch has fluted square posts and deep entablature. Leading to the porch is a three- to four-foot-wide concrete front walk with a rolled curb and V-shaped gutter, built ca. 1895-1915.

521 Auburn Avenue, ca. 1886. One-and-one-half-story Georgian cottage with Italianate details, including a molded cornice with brackets and hooded doors and windows. House has three-sided bay windows on the east and west and a decked pyramidal roof with six dormers, two of which appear to be later additions. House has been subdivided; original sheathing now obscured by asphalt shingles and asbestos tile; porch details have been removed. The porch is reached by a four-foot-wide concrete front walk, scored in a diamond pattern, built ca. 1890-1915.

521-1/2 Auburn Avenue, ca. 1920. Plain, rectangular store building with front-facing gable roof and pent canopy over entrance. Original weatherboards are now obscured by asphalt roll and asbestos siding.

522 Auburn Avenue, ca. 1894. A two-story frame house with Queen Anne elements. House has a hip roof with a front-facing cross gable over a cutaway bay with a jigsawn second-story panel. Decorative shingles and horseshoe-shaped vent appear in the gable end. Porch has turned posts, sawn brackets, an openwork frieze, and a stick balustrade. Former home of Antoine Graves, a prominent black real estate broker. Rehabilitated by the NPS and now used as a visitors' center. East of the house is a six-and-one-half-foot stone and brick retaining wall, built ca. 1895-1920.

526 Auburn Avenue, ca. 1895. Two-story frame house with Queen Anne elements, similar in configuration to 522 Auburn. Porch differs in having square posts and a deep entablature. Decorative shingles, a circular vent, and a pent eave are present in the gable end. Now used by the NPS for administrative offices.

530 Auburn, ca. 1895. Two-story frame house with hip roof, front-facing projecting gable, and rear additions. Similar to other Queen Anne houses on Auburn, but most details are removed or obscured by asphalt siding. Porch supports are cast-iron replacements. Diamond-shaped vent in gable end and circular window flanking entrance remain. Enclosing the front yard is a three-foot-high cast iron fence with arched tops and a star motif, built ca. 1895-1915. West of the house along the property line with 526 Auburn is a brick and stone wall approximately three feet high, built ca. 1895-1915.

535 Auburn Avenue, ca. 1895. Two-story frame house with Queen Anne elements. House has a rear addition, a hip roof with front-facing gable over a cutaway bay, and one-story full-facade porch with brackets, stick frieze, and a balustrade with missing sections. Asbestos shingles cover weatherboards. House is severely deteriorated with boarded-up windows and some uncovered openings and broken windows. Former home of Charles L. Harper, first black high school principal in Atlanta.

540 Auburn Avenue, ca. 1890. One-story, Vernacular T-plan frame house with complex roof configuration, rear addition, and front-facing cross gable. Front porch has chamfered posts and sawn brackets and trim. Rehabilitated in the early 1980s.

546 Auburn Avenue, ca. 1900. This vernacular gable-front-and-wing house with millwork decoration retains its early additions at the rear. The house has

weatherboard siding and a porch with chamfered posts and sawn brackets and trim. Rehabilitated in the early 1980s.

550 Auburn Avenue, ca. 1890. A two-story, U-plan frame residence with a hip roof and two front-facing gables on either side of a two-story porch. The shingled gable ends are bordered by pent eaves. The house was converted to apartments, and the western portion of the house is apparently an addition. Two-story porch at rear. Rehabilitated in the early 1980s.

29 Boulevard, 1912. Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church is a three-story, stone and brick building with a hip roof. It is a plain building with most of the exterior ornamentation associated with the two- and three-part jalousie windows, which replaced the original windows at an unknown date. The church was originally housed in the first floor with the classrooms and auditorium above.

37-39 Boulevard, 1894. Fire Station Number Six is a two-story, brick Romanesque Revival style building with a shed roof and decorative parapet. A single arched engine bay is flanked by pedestrian entrances, windows and an asymmetrically-placed tower with date panel. Bands of windows, arched on the Boulevard facade, are found at the second level. Elaborate brickwork includes corbels, door and window surrounds, a diaper-patterned frieze, and a machicolated cornice.

53-55 Boulevard, ca. 1905. Hip-roofed double shotgun house with weatherboard siding. Parallel hip-roofed entry porches have turned posts, sawn brackets, and a plain stick balustrade.

130 Boulevard, 1920-1923. A two-story, brick industrial building with a shed roof, decorative brick parapet, and brick pilasters. The one-story, two-bay addition to the north matches in both style and building materials.

442 Cain Street, 1929. A one-story, trapezoid-shaped, brick service station with a shed roof, stepped parapet, and skylight. Facade features a single service bay with double, cross-braced doors and a three-bay office.

420 Edgewood Avenue, 1912. A two-story, three-bay, rectangular-shaped commercial building with shed roof and stepped parapet. It is constructed of brick with side and rear segmental arched windows. Decorative elements include corbeled brickwork and a stamped-metal cornice.

421-429 Edgewood Avenue, 1946. A large, one-story commercial building constructed of masonry block and faced with beige brick. It contains four storefronts and has a shed roof and parapet. Decorative brickwork includes headers and stretchers lining display windows and brick panels above each store. Elements of the facade have been altered and the easternmost store is a later addition.

438-442 Edgewood Avenue, 1939. A brick garage with a hemispherical roof and stepped parapet. The three-part facade maintains its original fenestration and the pump island and shelter remain at the front of the lot. A one-story masonry addition of 1946-1953 adjoins the east side of the garage.

439-441 Edgewood Avenue, 1920. A two-story, brick, parallelogram-shaped commercial building with a shed roof and parapet. This duplex contains two storefronts with display windows and recessed entrances. Decorative elements include brick panels, a corbeled cornice and stone corner blocks.

443-445 Edgewood Avenue, 1909. A one-story, brick, parallelogram-shaped commercial building with a shed roof and parapet. This duplex contains two wood-and-glass storefronts surmounted by molded, panelled and bracketed cornice. Altered in 1961 and rehabilitated by the NPS in 1984.

444-446 Edgewood Avenue, 1909. A two-story, brick commercial building with evidence of a shed roof. This duplex contains two wood-and-glass storefronts with segmental-arched double windows and corbeled cornice above. Only the exterior walls remain. Altered 1911-1922 and in 1961.

447 Edgewood Avenue, 1909. A two-story, beige brick, parallelogram-shaped commercial building with a shed roof and parapet. Wood-and-glass storefront is surmounted by two triple windows at the second level and an elaborate brick entablature.

451 Edgewood Avenue, 1915. A one-story, beige brick, parallelogram-shaped building with a shed roof. The symmetrical wood-and-glass storefront is sheltered by a bracketed pent roof.

458 Edgewood Avenue, 1946. A small, one-story, concrete-block Art Moderne commercial building with a shed roof. Commercial buildings with Art Moderne features are rare in the Atlanta area. This building features rounded brick corners,

glass block, pigmented glass, oculi, and aluminum coping. A small, shed-roofed addition has been added to the rear of the building.

462 Edgewood Avenue, 1927. A one-story, brick commercial building with a shed roof and large plate-glass windows. Building to the south has been removed exposing the load-bearing brick wall and the interior is contiguous with 464-468 Edgewood Avenue. Substantially altered 1946-1952, leaving almost no traces of original storefront.

464-468 Edgewood Avenue, 1909. A large, two-story, brick commercial block with a shed roof and corbeled parapet. Fenestration is irregular with many windows and doors bricked in. Alterations of ca. 1930 and ca. 1955 have left little of the early twentieth century storefronts.

467 Edgewood Avenue, 1911. A two-story, brick commercial building with a shed roof and plain stone cornice. Main facade features a symmetrical, wood-and-glass storefront with a recessed entrance and a triple window at the second level. Fenestration on the east facade is irregular with a series of double windows at the second level. Several painted wall signs are present on the two street facades.

476-480 Edgewood Avenue, 1909. A large, two-story, brick commercial block with a shed roof and stepped parapet. Three wood-and-glass storefronts face Edgewood and are capped with a stamped-metal cornice. Second floor includes arched windows paired within a large brick arch. Elaborate brickwork is found throughout.

479 Edgewood Avenue, 1932. A small, three-bay, concrete-block filling station situated at the rear of the lot. It has a shed roof with broad, overhanging eaves and a symmetrical facade. Substantial alterations in 1935 and 1950 removed the pumps and awning and added a small ell and a two-bay, concrete-block garage to the site.

482 Edgewood Avenue, 1908. A one-story, brick commercial building with a shed roof and parapet. Symmetrical wood-and-glass storefront is surmounted by a stamped-metal cornice and decorative brick entablature.

483 Edgewood Avenue, 1908. A two-story, brick commercial building with a shed roof and corbeled brick cornice. Wood-and-glass storefront and tiled, recessed entrance is flanked by entrance to second floor. Three double windows at the second level feature stone sills and lintels above. The building has been rehabilitated.

484 Edgewood Avenue, 1908. A one-story, brick commercial building with a shed roof and parapet. Virtually the entire facade has been replaced with a metal-and-glass storefront. Only the outer piers and corbeled cornice remain.

485 Edgewood Avenue, 1908. A two-story, brick commercial building with a shed roof and corbeled brick cornice. Wood-and-glass storefront with recessed entrance is flanked by entrance to second floor. Three double windows at the second level feature stone sills and brick lintels.

487 Edgewood Avenue, 1909. A two-story, brick commercial building with a shed roof. Wood-and-glass storefront with recessed entrance is flanked by entrance to second floor and framed by stamped-metal piers and cornice. Second level contains two triple windows. Entablature is covered with sheet metal and two rear windows have been bricked-in.

488 Edgewood Avenue, 1909. A two-story, brick commercial building with a shed roof and corbeled brick cornice. Wood-and-glass storefront with recessed entrance is flanked by entrance to second floor. Symmetrical wood-and-glass storefront is capped by a stamped-metal cornice. Two double windows at second level contain segmental brick arches and stone sills. Evidence of painted wall sign on east elevation. Rehabilitated ca. 1986.

489 Edgewood Avenue, 1909. A two-story, brick commercial building with a shed roof and corbeled brick cornice. Wood-and-glass storefront with recessed entrance is flanked by entrance to second floor and framed by stamped-metal piers and cornice. Second level contains two triple windows with stone sills and lintels. Entablature features corbeled and panelled brick elements.

510 Edgewood Avenue, 1947. A two-story, flat-roofed, brick-and-concrete-block International style building with a gable-roofed, concrete-block structure at rear. A central tower is flanked by two wings, containing multiple roof levels, ribbon windows, boxed overhangs, white-stuccoed wall surfaces, and a recessed main entrance. The base of the building and elements of the tower are constructed of red brick with flush vertical joints and bands of darker brick. International style buildings are rare in Atlanta.

513 Edgewood Avenue, 1920. A two-story, brick commercial building. The facade was completely remodeled in the 1970s with plate glass windows and large panels that obscure most of the facade. Brick surfaces have been stuccoed and painted.

525 Edgewood Avenue, 1948. A one-story, three-bay, stuccoed, terra-cotta-tile garage with a flat roof and stepped parapet. One-story, brick structures have been added to the east and west sides. Significant alterations ca. 1986.

536 Edgewood Avenue, 1951. A large, one-story, rectangular-shaped, concrete-block building with a flat roof. The three-part facade features six automobile service bays with a three-bay office in the center.

541 Edgewood Avenue, 1906. A two-story, brick commercial building with a shed roof and stamped-metal cornice. Storefront is obscured by metal security grate. Second floor contains a three-part, basket-arched window flanked by narrow, sash windows. Elaborate ornamentation includes a machicolated brick cornice and terra-cotta rondels, finials, and egg-and-dart motifs.

53 Hogue Street, 1940. A one-story frame duplex with a recessed porch and a roof that is hipped at the rear and a clipped gable at the front. Porch is supported on square posts and has a plain stick balustrade.

409 Houston, 1923-1928. A one-story, trapezoid-shaped, brick-and-concrete-block industrial building with a gable roof and two, large saw-tooth skylights. Formerly a laundry, the large open factory retains original features.

412 Houston Street, 1920-1923. A one-story, shed-roofed brick industrial building with a two-story, shed-roofed office tower at the NW corner. Decorative brickwork and awning, milled newel post and wainscoting remain.

423 Houston Street, 1931. A two-story, gable-roofed, brick industrial building with gable-roofed end pavilions featuring terra-cotta door surrounds. One-and-two-story structures have been added on the south and east sides.

450 Houston Street, ca. 1923. A two-story, shed-roofed, trapezoid-shaped, brick commercial building with a three-part facade defined by four brick piers. Brick panels exist above the storefront and below the parapet.

456-460 Houston Street, 1942-1953. A one-story, trapezoid-shaped, concrete-block commercial building with a shed roof and stepped parapet. The facade contains two three-part storefronts.

466 Houston Street, 1938-1946. A one-story, trapezoidal-shaped, brick commercial building with a shed roof which supports three, large billboards. A corner storefront is located on Boulevard with a second on Houston Street.

14 Howell Street, ca. 1927. A one-story frame duplex with a front-facing gable roof and cross gables on each side. The porch across the front is carried on wood posts with molded capitals. Knee braces are present under the projecting eaves of the facade.

18 Howell Street, 1927. Two-story frame dwelling with an unusual decked gable roof, a single-story porch with a front-facing gable roof, and two rear additions. Knee braces appear under the eaves. The house is severely fire damaged and open to the elements.

24 Howell Street, ca. 1895. One-and-one-half story frame house with steeply pitched, front-facing, clipped gable roof, and a three-part window in the gable end. Alterations include two shed-roofed dormers, an enclosed, concrete-replacement porch, a carport added to the north side, and asbestos shingle siding.

28 Howell Street, ca. 1895. One-and-one-half story frame house with steeply pitched front-facing clipped gable roof. Massing is identical to 24 Howell Street, but a rear addition is present and the gable windows have probably been covered. Full-facade porch has square posts with capitals, turned balustrade, and decorative brackets.

54 Howell Street, 1931. Utilitarian two-story frame apartment building with side gable roof and full-facade two-story porch supported by brick posts. Rafter ends and knee braces appear in gable ends. Partially enclosed back porch. Severely fire damaged, with doors and windows boarded up. Rehabilitation was ongoing at time of survey.

454 Irwin Street, 1946. A two-story, rectangular-shaped, concrete-block industrial building with a gable roof and stepped gable ends. A concrete ramp rises to the steel-decked second story.

479-481 Old Wheat Street, ca. 1905. Hip-roofed frame double shotgun house, two rooms deep, that has been converted to a single-family house, with one entry blocked up. Concrete porch floor is a replacement, separate porch roofs have been joined, and porch posts and balustrade appear to be replacements.

483-485 Old Wheat Street, ca. 1905. Hip-roofed frame double shotgun house with parallel hip-roofed entry porches. House is vacant and threatened by lack of maintenance, but fabric is present for use in future rehabilitation. Some porch posts are missing and balustrades are replacements.

487-489 Old Wheat Street, ca. 1905. Hip-roofed frame double shotgun house with parallel hip-roofed entry porches. House is vacant and threatened by lack of maintenance, but retains fabric for use in future rehabilitation. Porch roofs and brackets are all that remain of porches. Some weatherboards have fallen off at rear.

Landscape Features

Alley running south from Auburn Avenue between 493 and 497 Auburn, ca. 1911. A sixteen- to twenty-foot-wide alley, currently paved with asphalt, that likely was unpaved through much of its history.

Brick sidewalk, north side of Auburn Avenue east of Howell, ca. 1890-1920. A herringbone brick sidewalk with a granite curb. Sidewalk is approximately 165 feet long and nine feet wide.

Brick sidewalk, west side of Howell Street north of Auburn Avenue, ca. 1895-1922. An approximately 40-foot segment of herringbone brick sidewalk with a granite curb. The pavement is approximately six feet wide.

River-stone sidewalk, north side of Auburn Avenue between Boulevard and Howell Street, ca. 1922-1923. The sidewalk is composed of a brown river-stone aggregate, with a granite curb. The pavement is approximately nine feet wide.

Appendix C
National Register Form

NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 10-90)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

80000413

RECEIVED
MAR 22 1994
INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

OMB No. 1024-0018

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site (MALU)
Roughly bounded by Jackson, Howell, and Old Wheat Streets and Edgewood Avenue.
not for publication ___

city or town Atlanta *vicinity* ___

state Georgia *code* GA *county* Fulton *code* 121

zip code 30312

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this __X__ nomination ____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ___X___ meets ____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ___ nationally ___ statewide ___ locally. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Edson Beall — 3/17/94
Signature of certifying official *Date*

Chief, Historic Preservation, National Park Service
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

_____ _____
Signature of commenting or other official *Date*

_____
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

____ entered in the National Register _____ _____
___ See continuation sheet.
____ determined eligible for the National Register _____ _____
___ See continuation sheet.
____ determined not eligible for the National Register _____ _____
____ removed from the National Register _____ _____

✓ other (explain): Documentation accepted on a listed unit of the NPS

Patrick W. Andrus for Signature of Keeper — 5/4/94 Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

_x_ private
_x_ public-local
___ public-State
_x_ public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

___ building(s)
_x_ district
___ site
___ structure
___ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
35	24	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
35	24	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 22

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:	Sub:
Domestic	single dwelling
	multiple dwelling
Religion	religious facility
Commerce/Trade	specialty store
	department store

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:	Sub:
Domestic	single dwelling
Religion	religious facility
Commerce/Trade	specialty store
Recreation and Culture	Other: National Historic Site

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:	Sub:
Late Victorian	Queen Anne
	Gothic
	Italianate
	Romanesque
Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movements	Bungalow/Craftsman
Modern Movements	Moderne
	International Style
Other:	double shotgun houses

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: brick, stone
roof: asphalt
walls: weatherboard, brick, asbestos
other: concrete, metal

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

__x__ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

__x__ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

__x__ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

____ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

__x__ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

____ B removed from its original location.

__x__ C a birthplace or a grave.

____ D a cemetery.

____ E a reconstructed building, object,or structure.

____ F a commemorative property.

__x__ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)
Ethnic Heritage: Black
Social History
Commerce
Architecture

Period of Significance ca. 1880-1968

Significant Dates 1929
1968
1906

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
Martin Luther King, Jr.

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.) See bibliography section of Historic Resource Study, pages 99-104.

Previous documentation on file (NPS)
___ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
_x_ previously listed in the National Register
previously determined eligible by the National Register
_x_ designated a National Historic Landmark
_x_ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # GA-1171; GA-1178-E; GA-2169
___ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data
___ State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State agency
_x_ Federal agency
___ Local government
___ University
___ Other
Name of repository: National Park Service, Southeast Regional Office; Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site, Administration Building

10. Geographical Data
Acreage of Property 22.4

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
A	16	743220	3737980	C	16	743620	3737780
B	16	743700	3738000	D	16	743220	3737780

___ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.) Boundaries are indicated on the accompanying sketch map.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Robert W. Blythe, Historian; Maureen A. Carroll, Historian; Steven H. Moffson, Architectural Historian

organization National Park Service, Southeast Regional Office

date October 15, 1993

street & number 75 Spring Street, S.W. *telephone* (404) 331-5988

city or town Atlanta *state* GA *zip code* 30303

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:
Continuation Sheets
Maps
A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs
Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)
name _____

street & number _____ *telephone* _____

city or town _____ *state* ____ *zip code* _____

Description of Historic Resources

The Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site is a small, urban park located in the city of Atlanta, Fulton County, Georgia. Containing approximately 38 acres, 4.78 of which are federally owned, the park lies 1-1/4 miles east of the central business district (see Map 1). The park commemorates the life and accomplishments of Martin Luther King, Jr., a prominent leader of the American Civil Rights Movement during the 1950s and 1960s. Federal legislation established the Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site and Preservation District on October 10, 1980, to "protect and interpret for the benefit, inspiration, and education of present and future generations the places where Martin Luther King, Junior, was born, where he lived, worked, and worshipped, and where he is buried."[1]

Historic resources within the park include the houses along the block where King was born (Birth-Home Block), Ebenezer Baptist Church where King, his father, and grandfather were pastors, and commercial buildings along Edgewood Avenue. As noted, the legislation identifies the grave site of King as a resource requiring protection and interpretation. Since 1971, the King Center has housed the grave site, consisting of the marble crypt and eternal flame. The King Center, a modern complex built between 1971 and 1981, also includes a memorial plaza with a fountain, interpretive exhibits, a restaurant, and administrative offices. The National Park Service (NPS) does not contribute to interpretive programs at the grave site. However, NPS does maintain the grave site at the King Center and conducts tours of the Birth Home.

The 1980 legislation (Public Law 96-428) creating the Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site authorized a 23.78-acre park roughly bounded by Jackson Street on the west, Old Wheat Street on the north, Howell Street on the east, and the rear property lines on the south side of Edgewood Avenue. The Reclamation Projects Authorization and Adjustment Act of 1992, enacted October 30, 1992, expanded the park boundaries to include properties lying between Jackson Street and Boulevard north to Cain Street.

The Martin Luther King, Jr., Preservation District (Preservation District), also established in the 1980 legislation, adjoins the Site on the east, north, and west and embraces the larger Auburn Avenue black community in which King grew up. The Preservation District links King's career to the black business, religious, social, and political organizations that flourished along Auburn Avenue prior to and during King's lifetime (see Map 2).

Two National Register districts, the Martin Luther King, Jr., Historic District and the Sweet Auburn Historic District, were established in the 1970s and

---

[1]Public Law 96-428, October 10, 1980.

commemorate King and the historic Atlanta east-side black community. The Martin Luther King, Jr., Historic District was placed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1974 and was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1977. The 1980 Martin Luther King, Jr., Preservation District, established by the Site's enabling legislation, includes all property listed in the 1974 historic district. The Sweet Auburn Historic District was made a National Historic Landmark in 1976. In addition, the city of Atlanta, through the Atlanta Urban Design Commission, established the Martin Luther King, Jr., Landmark District in 1989, consolidating two existing city preservation districts. Most of these districts overlap within the Site, providing protection through federal programs and local zoning ordinances.

The areas included in this nomination, herein referred to as Site, include 22.4 acres of the expanded 38-acre Site (see Section 10). The Site is irregularly shaped and roughly bounded by Jackson Street on the west, Auburn Avenue on the north from Jackson to Boulevard, Old Wheat Street on the north between Boulevard and Howell Street, Howell Street on the east, and the rear property lines on the south side of Edgewood Avenue (see Map 2).

The architectural resources of the Site primarily represent the formative years of King's life, from 1929 through 1948, rather than the events for which he subsequently gained national and international recognition. Although much of his civil rights activity occurred outside Atlanta, King resided in Atlanta from 1960 to 1968. He also established a base of operations for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in the city in 1957. Most of the resources within the Site are important for interpreting King's youth; Ebenezer Baptist Church is the only significant Site resource associated with King's adult career.

Most properties within the Site front one of two avenues running east and west, Auburn Avenue and Edgewood Avenue. Current land use within the Site is mostly residential on Auburn Avenue and largely commercial on Edgewood Avenue. The Site is located in a predominantly black residential and commercial area characterized by low-income housing in poor condition and moderate commercial activity on Edgewood and along Auburn Avenue west of the Site. The Martin Luther King, Jr., Center for Nonviolent Social Change, Inc. (King Center), is located on the west side of the Site and occupies an entire city block.

Auburn Avenue Development

The Site lies approximately a mile and a quarter from the central business district and represents the commercial and residential growth advanced by streetcar expansion. In 1884, the Gate City Street Railroad Company constructed a horsecar line which traveled from the central business district along Pryor Street to Wheat Street (later changed to Auburn Avenue) and along Wheat to Jackson Street, then north on Jackson. This streetcar line provided

direct access to downtown and spurred residential development along Auburn Avenue. In 1889, entrepreneur Joel Hurt operated Atlanta's first electric street railway along Edgewood Avenue linking downtown and the suburb of Inman Park. In the 1890s, existing horsecar lines were electrified, and new electric streetcar lines were built. By the mid-1890s, streetcar lines on Auburn and Edgewood avenues provided commuters direct access from their homes to jobs and shopping downtown.[2]

Beginning in 1880, the heirs of John Lynch began to divide and sell his large property holdings along Auburn Avenue between Jackson and Howland (now Howell). Some residential development was evident, but it was located primarily north of Auburn Avenue. 521 Auburn Avenue, built on property formerly part of the John Lynch estate between 1882 and 1888, was an early residence on Auburn Avenue east of Boulevard. It is the only extant residence built prior to 1890 within the Site. Other residences appeared in rapid succession beginning in the 1890s. By 1899, most lots along Auburn between Jackson and Howell were developed, although denser residential development remained west. The residences within the Site varied in size and type, but most were two-story wood dwellings with one-story rear extensions. The north side of Auburn Avenue between Hogue and Howell has shallow, narrow lots occupied by seven two-story dwellings. Access to the rear of the north side lots was off Old Wheat Street. The south side, however, developed less rigorously. This resulted in larger lots and fewer houses, with varied, and deeper, setbacks from the street. Access to the rear of the southside lots was by driveways off of Auburn Avenue.

Small-scale commercial development accompanied residential growth. Several corner stores and restaurants served Auburn Avenue residents. One was located on the northwest corner of Boulevard and Auburn. Another corner grocery, located across from the Birth Home on the northwest corner of Hogue and Auburn, was operated by a succession of white merchants in a building constructed in 1909 (502 Auburn). During the 1920s, a small, one-room building (521½ Auburn Avenue) was intermittently operated as a soda fountain and cafe, in front of 521 Auburn Avenue. Another small building, located at 57 Howell, housed a restaurant during the 1930s. The Jenkins family, owners of the parcel of land in the triangle bounded by Auburn, Old Wheat and Howell streets, built two store buildings (554 and 556 Auburn) adjacent to their residence at 550 Auburn. The buildings, now demolished, were leased to a series of white grocers and butchers. The original residence was divided into apartments ca. 1900, and the Jenkins family owned the properties until 1963.

---

[2]Franklin M. Garrett, *Atlanta and Its Environs: A Chronicle of Its People and Events* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1969), vol. I, 879, 957, vol. II, 188-89.

Two churches, Ebenezer Baptist and Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church, are located within the Site. In 1912, the Catholic church constructed a three-story stone church and school building. Fire Station Number Six occupied the southeast corner of Auburn and Boulevard and served the surrounding residential community, consisting primarily of wood structures, beginning in 1894.[3]

In 1905, the Empire State Investment Company developed the northeast corner of Auburn and Boulevard. Empire bought the unimproved property from Adolphus Tittlebaum for $3650 and built nine duplex dwellings that occupied half of the block between Boulevard and Hogue. One of the lots was sold in November 1905 for $1800 as a rental property. These double shotgun dwellings were a sharp break from the existing houses on Auburn but were typical of dwellings to the north. They also represented the first low-cost rental housing built in the Site.[4]

Prior to 1900, Auburn Avenue east of Jackson Street developed as a predominantly white, middle-class residential district. Single-family, one- and two-story houses constructed in the 1890s lined principal streets. Some multiple-family dwellings were present, but the majority were large, modestly decorated houses. Many had stables and wood and coal sheds in the rear. When Empire constructed the nine duplexes, it foreshadowed a change, suggesting that multiple-family housing was in demand in the area. Many multiple-family units were constructed on alleys or subdivided portions of original lots. The 1906 race riot, fought in the streets and on the streetcars less than a mile away, also influenced the course of development on Auburn Avenue.

Between 1909 and 1910, most white-occupied houses on the Birth-Home Block were sold or leased to blacks. By 1920, the Auburn Avenue neighborhood was overwhelmingly black. Auburn Avenue comprised the southern boundary of a developing black middle-class neighborhood which adjoined Morris Brown College, established in 1881 and located at Boulevard and Irwin Street.[5] But not all neighborhood residents were middle class. Many were service workers or manual

---

[3]Andy Ambrose, Vincent Fort, Alexa Henderson, Dean Rowley, Carole Stevens, and Barbara Tagger, *Historic Resource Study, Auburn Avenue Community of Atlanta, 1865-1930* (Draft) (Atlanta, n.d.), Part II, 2-19.

[4]Deed Book 177, Page 370 between A. Tittlebaum and Empire State Investment Company; Deed Book 194, Page 78 between W.A. Foster and Empire State Investment Company, Fulton County Courthouse, Clerk of Court, Atlanta, Georgia. City directory entries demonstrate that by 1910, these houses were occupied by blacks.

[5]Morris Brown College remained on Boulevard until 1932, when it moved to the West Side and became part of the Atlanta University complex (Garrett, vol. II, 28).

laborers. Several duplex residences were constructed between 1911 and 1928 behind the larger homes on Auburn Avenue and on alleys accessed from Edgewood Avenue to the south. The larger houses on Auburn were occupied by black professionals and business people. The multiple-family dwellings and the small, two- and three-room houses sheltered working-class families.[6]

Auburn Avenue west of Jackson, within the Preservation District but outside the Site, developed as a black business enclave following the race riot of 1906, when many black businesses left downtown. Businesses ranged from small retail concerns like groceries and barber shops to banks and insurance companies serving the Atlanta black community. Black entrepreneurs developed a number of commercial buildings in this area, including the three-story Rucker Building of 1904 (158-160 Auburn Avenue) and the four-story Herndon Building of 1926 (231-245 Auburn Avenue). The six-story Odd Fellows Building, constructed in 1912, and its adjacent 1913 auditorium building (228-250 Auburn Avenue) were important centers of black business and social life. Auburn Avenue remained a center of black business activity into the 1950s.[7]

Although the black business district west of Jackson continued to prosper between 1920 and 1950, Auburn Avenue and surrounding residential streets failed to attract or keep community residents engaged in professional occupations. By 1930, few middle-class residents remained on Auburn Avenue. This decline manifested itself in various ways. Several multiple-family dwellings were constructed on the Birth-Home Block and adjacent streets. Apartment houses at 509 Auburn (later demolished) and 506 Auburn were built in 1925 and 1933, respectively. Another quadraplex at 54 Howell Street was constructed in 1931 and subdivided an already crowded house lot. During the 1930s, Auburn Avenue witnessed the subdivision of single-family dwellings, the deterioration of its housing, and increased tenancy. By 1940, the U.S. Census reported that two-thirds of the dwelling units in the Site were in disrepair and 77 percent lacked a private bath.[8]

By 1940, few people living on Auburn could afford to own their homes, and the area had become increasingly transient. Most tenants remained less than five

---

[6]Ambrose, et al., Part I, 2-9; *Catalog of Historic Structures, Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site and Preservation District* (National Park Service, 1983), 66-78.

[7]Ambrose et al., Part I, 1-29; *Catalog of Historic Structures*, 17-29.

[8]Ambrose, et al., Part I, 2-33.

years.[9] Most residents had little money for house maintenance, and by the late 1930s Martin Luther King, Sr., described the Birth-Home Block neighborhood as "running down." He moved his family to a house several blocks away on Boulevard in 1941.[10] Between 1930 and 1950, Auburn Avenue increasingly became an impoverished black working-class district. In the 1960s, when housing options for blacks in other parts of the city expanded again, the Auburn Avenue area began to decline more rapidly.[11]

The historic streetscape features of Auburn Avenue are essential in establishing the physical context in which King was born, where he lived, and where he worked. The major spatial relationships that define the streetscape within the Birth-Home block, have remained relatively constant since its development in the late nineteenth century. A fairly consistent right-of-way on Auburn has been maintained, measuring fifty-eight to sixty feet wide within which a forty-foot wide (curb to curb) two-way traffic lane is centered.

According to City Council records, brick sidewalks were laid with granite curbing along both sides of Auburn Avenue through the Birth-Home block as early as the 1890s. This predates the paving of the street in this area by at least a decade. Boulevard, where the street car line turned north off Auburn Avenue, often marks a transition point in the city services, and records show that in 1913 residents east of Boulevard petitioned to have Auburn paved from Boulevard to Randolph. Although the date of the first paving of this area of Auburn Avenue is not clear from the records, City Council minutes do show that in 1922 the "old pavement" was "condemned" from Boulevard to Randolph Street and was to be repaved with concrete. At this time, the existing brick sidewalks along Auburn Avenue were also to be replaced with concrete walks with the granite curbs retained.[12] Remnants of the original brick sidewalks survive at the northwest corner of Howell Street and Auburn Avenue and along the north side of Auburn Avenue, in the triangle east of Howell Street. An original stretch of the exposed river-stone aggregate sidewalk that was poured in the 1920s exists along the north side of Auburn Avenue between Hogue Street and Howell street.

---

[9]City Directory research between 1890 and 1950 indicated a variety of laboring tenants along Auburn Avenue. Very few remained more than five years.

[10]Stephen B. Oates, *Let the Trumpet Sound: The Life of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (New York: Mentor, 1985), 12.

[11]Ambrose, et al., Part I, 2-36.

[12]Atlanta City Council Minutes, 1920-1940, Atlanta History Center, Atlanta, Georgia; "*Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site Cultural Landscape Report: The Birth-Home Block*" (Atlanta: National Park Service, Southeast Regional Office, unpublished draft, 1993), 18-19.

In 1924 an ordinance calling for the paving of Howell Street NE was passed and specified to be "Extra Vibrolithic concrete, six inches thick." City Council records make no mention of the street surfaces along Old Wheat and Hogue, but by the 1937 Cadastral Survey both of these streets were paved with concrete, with granite curbs. Old Wheat Street never had sidewalks, and the earlier brick sidewalks remain along Howell Street, although Hogue Street sidewalks were concrete according to the 1937 Cadastral survey.[13] These original concrete sidewalks still exist along Hogue Street between Auburn Avenue and Old Wheat Street.

Other streetscape features that have been described in oral histories to have existed within the Site during the 1929-1941 period include street trees (two of the three noted in 1949 aerial photography survive at the northwest corner of Auburn Avenue at the intersection with Howell Street), street lighting at the top of wooden poles and described by former residents as "coolie hat" lamps (no extant examples), and fire hydrants on the northwest corners of Auburn and Boulevard, Hogue, and Howell (1970s models have replaced the 1930s hydrants in the same locations).[14]

Commercial Corridor Development

The commercial strip along Edgewood Avenue typifies business districts, developed between 1890 and 1930, located along streetcar lines that emanated from American downtowns. Streetcars facilitated the expansion of metropolitan areas through increased residential and commercial growth. Neighborhood shopping districts developed to serve the new residential areas and replicated the land-use patterns established in downtown business districts. These outlying commercial areas also extended the central business district and represented the city's expanding commercial perimeter.

---

[13]*Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site Cultural Landscape Report,* 19-20.

[14]*Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site Cultural Landscape Report,* 20-22; All of the following information on area development and change, including building construction dates and the evolving racial composition of the area, is culled from several resources. Sanborn Maps available at Georgia State University for 1899, 1911, 1920, 1923, and 1932 were consulted. Files at the Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site contain information obtained primarily from Atlanta City Directories and building permits. Several area studies of the Birth-Home block landscape both historic and contemporary were consulted, including a 1937 Cadastral Survey by the Works Projects Administration. Historic aerial photographs for 1936 and 1949 were perused. In addition, a 1928 City Engineer's Topographic Map of the area was consulted.

Edgewood Avenue developed initially as a residential area. In 1899, one- and two-story frame dwellings dominated the street from Piedmont to Randolph. Within the Site, most homes were modest L-plan cottages, shotguns, or duplexes. Vacant lots dotted Edgewood Avenue with denser residential development south and east towards the railroad corridor and west toward the central business district. Two large, two-story dwellings, typical of older residential development, occupied the northeast and northwest corners of Jackson and Edgewood. Several properties had stables and coal sheds behind the houses. Most houses were located close to the street with front or side porches. Lot size varied considerably with the larger lots often crowded with two or more dwellings.

Several corner stores, adjacent to dwellings, catered to the community along Edgewood at Howell, on Boulevard, and on Chamberlin (now Chamberlain) Street. A large church, the Fourth Presbyterian Church, served the community at Chamberlin and Jackson. Similar to Auburn Avenue, Edgewood was racially mixed between 1890 and 1905. West of Boulevard was predominantly black, and east of Boulevard was predominantly white. After 1905, commercial buildings began replacing residences along Edgewood Avenue extending from downtown to the east. Compared to Auburn, Edgewood Avenue developed earlier commercially, but never gained the popularity of "Sweet Auburn's" black commercial district. In addition, the commercial development along Edgewood catered to white business interests, although black workers likely were employed at some concerns.

In the first decade of the twentieth century, Edgewood Avenue between Jackson and Daniel Street developed as a commercial and light industrial district, with one- and two-story commercial buildings ultimately replacing almost all residences. East of Daniel Street remained mostly residential until the late 1930s, although many homes on the north side of Edgewood were removed, and the lots left vacant. B. D. Watkins, a real estate developer associated with Asa Candler, president and majority owner of the Coca-Cola Company, built seven two-story brick buildings in 1908 and 1909. Another businessman, Marvin P. Roane, financed two buildings in 1906 and 1909. These two men contributed greatly to the commercial development of Edgewood Avenue.

In 1911, Edgewood Avenue hosted a variety of businesses including retail stores, a bottling company, coffee roasting, and electric motor manufacturing. By 1925, industrial concerns flourished, and a brush factory, peanut butter factory, another bottling company, auto storage, and a filling station lined Edgewood. Typically, the buildings' tenants were white and operated groceries, dry goods stores, liquor stores, cleaners, barber/beauty shops, pawn shops, upholstering, plumbing, shoemaking, cabinet making, auto repair, and auto parts supply shops and served a racially mixed working-class clientele.[15]

---

[15] *Catalog of Historic Structures*, 56-64, 84-89.

Between 1908 and 1927, the commercial development of Edgewood Avenue had reached its peak. The south side of Edgewood had two blocks of nearly continuous buildings between Fitzgerald and Daniel. These buildings, constructed by Watkins and others, were situated on short narrow lots with their front elevations abutting the sidewalk. Little vegetation obscured the buildings in the commercial area. Glassed storefronts commonly characterized the street level facades. As private automobiles increasingly dominated the streets, painted signs on the facades of buildings advertised the stores' goods and where customers could park.

Several automobile-related buildings, two service stations and a drive-in store, were constructed just before and after World War II. The 1946 Circle Drive-In Liquor store incorporated elements of Moderne architecture. This building has suffered neglect, for many years serving as a storage area for Danneman's grocery store to the east. It currently houses a cafe for the homeless. Three other post-war buildings replaced residential buildings formerly located between Daniel and Howell. Most of these buildings provided parking in front with the buildings set back from the sidewalk. The most notable, the McDonald Sheet Metal Company, influenced by the International style, is still occupied by an industrial concern.

As the residential areas in the Auburn Avenue vicinity declined, the businesses along Edgewood also suffered deterioration. Suburban growth, outlying shopping malls, and industrial parks further diminished the economic function of these commercial and industrial corridors. In addition, the construction of Interstates 75/85 bisected the continuous commercial corridor along Edgewood emanating from downtown, thus isolating the eastern commercial area. Many buildings continue to house business concerns, and some economic revitalization is occurring. However, vacant lots, both historic and due to loss of buildings, and deteriorating buildings still characterize these corridors.

Currently, the most intact historic area of Auburn Avenue lies between Boulevard and Howell and commonly is referred to as the Birth-Home Block, because it includes the birthplace of Martin Luther King, Jr. This area contains the oldest residential resources and the highest level of integrity. Located on this portion of Auburn are twenty-three historic residences constructed between circa 1886 and 1933. These feature large Queen Anne style residences juxtaposed with smaller double-shotguns. The National Park Service has rehabilitated many of these dwellings, restoring the exteriors to the 1929-1941 period of significance. Two lots, 502, which contained a house and store, and 509, which had an apartment building, are now vacant. One modern intrusion is located at 531 Auburn Avenue and consists of two 1954 brick apartment buildings, on a lot formerly containing four wood dwellings comprising the Baptist Memorial Institute School.

Many of the landscape features that characterized the Birth-Home Block during the 1929-1941 period remain intact. These structures were constructed during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and include resources associated with individual dwellings, such walls and fences, and streetscape features such as sidewalks and alleys. These resources comprise residential landscapes and historic streetscapes and provide an understanding of the environment in which Martin Luther King, Jr., was reared. Individual landscape features have been included in the List of Classified Structures and documented in the Cultural Landscape Report. Representative examples of landscape features are described below.

West of the Birth-Home Block lies the King Center, the modern city of Atlanta community center and natatorium, and Ebenezer Baptist Church. Prior to 1960s urban renewal, this portion of Auburn Avenue consisted of wood, one- and two-story dwellings, likely similar to those farther east. The church, completed in 1922, anchors the western portion of Auburn Avenue historically but is now isolated from the Site's other historic resources. Farther west lies the historic Sweet Auburn district which served the black residential community to the east.

Thirteen additional dwellings complete the historic residential resources adjacent to the principal Birth-Home Block dwellings: three shotgun houses on an alley off of Auburn Avenue, three duplexes on Old Wheat Street, one duplex on Boulevard, five residences with Craftsman-style elements on Howell Street, and one on Hogue Street. These remaining resources are in various stages of deterioration. The buildings on Old Wheat and Howell streets are most endangered. The Birth-Home Block represents the southern edge of a substantial late nineteenth and early twentieth century black middle-class residential community roughly bounded by Jackson on the west, Randolph Street on the east, and Forrest Avenue on the north. Housing in this community ranged from plain two- to three-room houses to modest two-story wood dwellings. The 1917 fire destroyed many homes in this community, and the construction of Interstate 75/85 further obliterated evidence of the community.[16]

Edgewood Avenue, within the Site, is entirely commercial with sixteen brick buildings constructed prior to 1916, three additional buildings erected between 1920 and 1945, and the remaining twelve buildings representative of post-war construction. Historic resources are concentrated around the intersection of Boulevard and Edgewood Avenue and represent a growth spurt between 1908 and 1915.

---

[16]Ambrose, et al., Part I, 2-17.

A second characteristic of Edgewood Avenue is the preponderance of vacant lots and nonhistoric buildings. East of the Boulevard, the historic integrity of Edgewood Avenue buildings decreases both in quantity and quality. The Roane Building, constructed in 1906 , stands alone on the southwest corner of Edgewood and Howell Street, a full block away from any other historic buildings. At one time, one- and two-story wood dwellings occupied Edgewood Avenue east of Boulevard, an extension of the residential area to the north. When these residences were removed, many between 1928 and 1936, the lots either remained vacant or had postwar commercial buildings erected on them. Vacant, undeveloped lots have characterized Edgewood Avenue throughout the period from 1880 to the present. Edgewood Avenue also has suffered significant losses of historic commercial buildings in the past ten years. Buildings at 410, 414, 461-465, and 491-493 Edgewood are gone. One of the last remaining residences at 528 Edgewood, built in 1895, also has vanished.

Descriptions of Contributing Properties

Buildings

407-413 Auburn Avenue, 1914-1922 (IDLCS# 90002). Ebenezer Baptist Church is a two-story, rectangular, brick, Gothic Revival church with a gable roof and two large towers flanking the main elevation. The lower level, which contains the meeting hall, is covered with gray stucco and scored to resemble stone. Two-story buttresses divide the side elevations into nine bays containing stained-glass lancet windows. Brick beltcourses, panels, corbels and window hoods ornament the front and side elevations. The auditorium is an open, rectangular space, with the pulpit and choir elevated on a platform and a balcony across the rear of the sanctuary. The education building was constructed in 1956; in 1971, a new front was placed on it.

449 Auburn Avenue, 1976 (IDLCS# 90045). The Martin Luther King, Jr., grave site consists of a large white marble sarcophagus with a stepped base and a projecting cap. The sarcophagus is sited on a circular island in a pool, which is part of a memorial plaza that incorporates cascading pools, a fountain, and the Freedom Walk, a barrel-vaulted arcade. The narrow end of the sarcophagus, which faces Auburn Avenue, carries the inscription, "REV. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR./1929-1968/Free at Last, Free at Last/Thank God Almighty/I'm Free at Last."

472-474 (IDLCS# 23361), **476-478** (IDLCS# 23363), **480-[482]**[17] (IDLCS# 90003), and **484-[486] Auburn Avenue** (IDLCS# 90004), 1905. Four identical hip-roofed double

[17]Street numbers no longer used, as with duplexes that have been converted to single-family residences, are indicated in brackets.

shotgun houses with weatherboard siding that have been rehabilitated by the NPS. Each unit of each duplex has a hip-roofed entry porch with turned posts, sawn brackets, and a plain stick balustrade. After rehabilitation, 472-474 and 476-478 remained duplexes, while 480-482 and 484-486 were converted to single-family residences. The rehabilitation connected the decks of the separate front porches on each unit.

488-[490] Auburn Avenue, 1905 (IDLCS# 90005). Hip-roofed double shotgun house with weatherboard siding. Parallel hip-roofed porches have turned posts, sawn brackets, and a plain stick balustrade. NPS rehabilitation, which will convert structure to a single-family house, was ongoing at time of survey.

491-[493] Auburn Avenue, 1911 (IDLCS# 90047). A small, rectangular-plan apartment building with a hip roof and a recessed, two-story, full-facade porch. The building has square porch posts and exposed rafter ends. Asbestos siding now sheaths the building, presumably covering original weatherboards.

493 Auburn Avenue, rear units 1-2 (IDLCS# 90007), **3-4** (IDLCS# 90008), **5-6** (IDLCS# 90009), 1911. Three identical two-room-deep double shotguns are on an alley behind the Birth Block. Each has a hip roof, a combined front porch with turned posts, milled brackets, and a shed roof.

497 Auburn Avenue, ca. 1900 (IDLCS# 90010). A two-story, single-family house with Queen Anne elements. The house has a hip roof with a front-facing cross gable and an addition at the rear. The one-story full-facade porch has a wide entablature with dentils and a stick balustrade, while the gable end features a sunburst motif, decorative shingles and a double vent. In the back yard is a small frame storage shed, oriented 45 degrees from the lot line, built circa 1933-1935.

501 Auburn Avenue, ca. 1894 (IDLCS# 90011). This two-story, single-family home, the birthplace of Martin Luther King, Jr., was restored by the NPS. The house incorporates a number of Queen Anne stylistic elements: irregular massing, a side entrance, a hip roof with lower cross gables, decorative shingles in the gable ends, and a wrap-around porch with turned posts, milled brackets, and a plain, openwork balustrade.

503 Auburn Avenue, ca. 1895 (IDLCS# 90012). A two-story house with Queen Anne elements. The house features a hip roof with a front-facing gable and an addition at the rear. Beneath the shingle-clad gable end is a three-sided cutaway bay with a jigsawn panel at the second story. A one-story porch supported on brick piers and square columns runs across the facade. One pier lacks a post, which may originally have been present. The front yard has five granite steps leading to the house from the sidewalk, built ca. 1895-1915.

506 Auburn Avenue, 1933 (IDLCS# 90013). A plain, four-unit apartment building that may have been built as a duplex. The building has a hip roof and a recessed, two-story, full-facade porch carried on brick piers and square posts. An NPS rehabilitation is scheduled for completion in 1993.

510 Auburn Avenue, ca. 1890 (IDLCS# 90014). A two-story house with a hip roof, a front-facing gable over a cutaway bay, and a single-story, full-facade porch. Surviving Queen Anne features include turned porch posts and sawn brackets, a diamond-shaped window next to the main entrance, and decorative shingles in the gable end. Alterations include asphalt siding over weatherboards, an exterior stair to the second floor on the west, boarded up windows, and probable removal of brackets over the cutaway bay. In the back yard is an eighteen-inch-high, thirty-foot-long rubble stone wall running parallel to back lot line, built ca. 1895-1945.

514 Auburn Avenue, 1893 (IDLCS# 23362). A two-story house with Queen Anne elements, possibly converted from a single-family to a duplex at an early point in its history. Rehabilitated by the NPS, the house retains decorative trusswork and a circular vent in the gable end and has two additions at the rear. Two-story, full-facade porch with fluted posts. Along the east property line is brick and stone wall with a partial stucco finish, built ca. 1895-1945. The wall ranges from two to four feet in height.

515 Auburn Avenue, 1909 (IDLCS# 90015). A vernacular gabled-ell house, with several additions, that was converted from a single-family residence to a duplex. The roof is complex with two hipped portions and a front-facing gable. The wraparound porch displays Tuscan columns.

518 Auburn Avenue, ca. 1893 (IDLCS# 90016). A two-story house with Queen Anne elements. Two front-facing gables project from the hip roof. The western gabled projection is probably an addition, and a three-sided cutaway bay is beneath the eastern gable end. Both gable ends have decorative shingles, horseshoe-shaped vents, and pent eaves. One-story, full-facade porch has fluted square posts and deep entablature. Leading to the porch is a three- to four-foot-wide concrete front walk with a rolled curb and V-shaped gutter, built ca. 1895-1915.

521 Auburn Avenue, ca. 1886 (IDLCS# 90017). One-and-one-half-story Georgian cottage with Italianate details, including a molded cornice with brackets and hooded doors and windows. House has three-sided bay windows on the east and west and a decked pyramidal roof with six dormers, two of which appear to be later additions. House has been subdivided; original sheathing now obscured by asphalt shingles and asbestos tile; porch details have been removed. The porch is reached by a four-foot-wide concrete front walk, scored in a diamond pattern, built ca. 1890-1915.

521½ Auburn Avenue, ca. 1920 (IDLCS# 90018). Plain, rectangular store building with front-facing gable roof and pent canopy over entrance. Original weatherboards are now obscured by asphalt roll and asbestos siding.

522 Auburn Avenue, ca. 1894 (IDLCS# 23326). A two-story frame house with Queen Anne elements. House has a hip roof with a front-facing cross gable over a cutaway bay with a jigsawn second-story panel. Decorative shingles and horseshoe-shaped vent appear in the gable end. Porch has turned posts, sawn brackets, an openwork frieze, and a stick balustrade. Former home of Antoine Graves, a prominent black real estate broker. Rehabilitated by the NPS and now used as a visitors' center. East of the house is a six-and-one-half-foot stone and brick retaining wall, built ca. 1895-1920.

526 Auburn Avenue, ca. 1895 (IDLCS# 23365). Two-story frame house with Queen Anne elements, similar in configuration to 522 Auburn. Porch differs in having square posts and a deep entablature. Decorative shingles, a circular vent, and a pent eave are present in the gable end. Now used by the NPS for administrative offices.

530 Auburn, ca. 1895 (IDLCS# 90019). Two-story frame house with hip roof, front-facing projecting gable, and rear additions. Similar to other Queen Anne houses on Auburn, but most details are removed or obscured by asphalt siding. Post supports are cast-iron replacements. Diamond-shaped vent in gable end and circular window flanking entrance remain. Enclosing the front yard is a three-foot-high cast iron fence with arched tops and a star motif, built ca. 1895-1915. West of the house along the property line with 526 Auburn is a brick and stone wall approximately three feet high, built ca. 1895-1915.

535 Auburn Avenue, ca. 1895 (IDLCS# 90020). Two-story frame house with Queen Anne elements. House has a rear addition, a hip roof with front-facing gable over a cutaway bay, and one-story full-facade porch with brackets, stick frieze, and a balustrade with missing sections. Asbestos shingles cover weatherboards. House is severely deteriorated with boarded-up windows and some uncovered openings and broken windows. Former home of Charles L. Harper, first black high school principal in Atlanta.

540 Auburn Avenue, ca. 1890 (IDLCS# 23368). One-story, Vernacular T-plan frame house with complex roof configuration, rear addition, and front-facing cross gable. Front porch has chamfered posts and sawn brackets and trim. Rehabilitated in the early 1980s.

546 Auburn Avenue, ca. 1900 (IDLCS# 23370). This vernacular gable-front-and-wing house with millwork decoration retains its early additions at the rear. The house has weatherboard siding and a porch with chamfered posts and sawn brackets and trim. Rehabilitated in the early 1980s.

550 Auburn Avenue, ca. 1890 (IDLCS# 23367). A two-story, U-plan frame residence with a hip roof and two front-facing gables on either side of a two-story porch. The shingled gable ends are bordered by pent eaves. The house was converted to apartments, and the western portion of the house is apparently an addition. Two-story porch at rear. Rehabilitated in the early 1980s.

29 Boulevard, 1912 (IDLCS# 90040). Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church is a three-story, stone and brick building with a hip roof. It is a plain building with most of the exterior ornamentation associated with the two- and three-part jalousie windows, which replaced the original windows at an unknown date. The church was originally housed in the first floor with the classrooms and auditorium above.

37-39 Boulevard, 1894 (IDLCS# 90039). Fire Station Number Six is a two-story, brick Romanesque Revival style building with a shed roof and decorative parapet. A single arched engine bay is flanked by pedestrian entrances, windows and an asymmetrically-placed tower with date panel. Bands of windows, arched on the Boulevard facade, are found at the second level. Elaborate brickwork includes corbels, door and window surrounds, a diaper-patterned frieze, and a machicolated cornice.

53-55 Boulevard, ca. 1905 (IDLCS# 23364). Hip-roofed double shotgun house with weatherboard siding. Parallel hip-roofed entry porches have turned posts, sawn brackets, and a plain stick balustrade.

420 Edgewood Avenue, 1912. A two-story, three-bay, rectangular-shaped commercial building with shed roof and stepped parapet. It is constructed of brick with side and rear segmental arched windows. Decorative elements include corbeled brickwork and a stamped-metal cornice.

438-442 Edgewood Avenue, 1939. A brick garage with a hemispherical roof and stepped parapet. The three-part facade maintains its original fenestration and the pump island and shelter remain at the front of the lot. A one-story masonry addition of 1946-1953 adjoins the east side of the garage.

439-441 Edgewood Avenue, 1920. A two-story, brick, parallelogram-shaped commercial building with a shed roof and parapet. This duplex contains two storefronts with display windows and recessed entrances. Decorative elements include brick panels, a corbeled cornice and stone corner blocks.

443-445 Edgewood Avenue, 1909 (IDLCS# 23327). A one-story, brick, parallelogram-shaped commercial building with a shed roof and parapet. This duplex contains two wood-and-glass storefronts surmounted by molded, panelled and bracketed cornice. Altered in 1961 and rehabilitated by the NPS in 1984.

444-446 Edgewood Avenue, 1909. A two-story, brick commercial building with evidence of a shed roof. This duplex contains two wood-and-glass storefronts with segmental-arched double windows and corbeled cornice above. Only the exterior walls remain. Altered 1911-1922 and in 1961.

447 Edgewood Avenue, 1909. A two-story, beige brick, parallelogram-shaped commercial building with a shed roof and parapet. Wood-and-glass storefront is surmounted by two triple windows at the second level and an elaborate brick entablature.

451 Edgewood Avenue, 1915. A one-story, beige brick, parallelogram-shaped building with a shed roof. The symmetrical wood-and-glass storefront is sheltered by a bracketed pent roof.

458 Edgewood Avenue, 1946. A small, one-story, concrete-block Art Moderne commercial building with a shed roof. Commercial buildings with Art Moderne features are rare in the Atlanta area. This building features rounded brick corners, glass block, pigmented glass, oculi and aluminum coping. A small, shed-roofed addition has been added to the rear of the building.

464-468 Edgewood Avenue, 1909. A large, two-story, brick commercial block with a shed roof and corbeled parapet. Fenestration is irregular with many windows and doors bricked in. Alterations of ca. 1930 and ca. 1955 have left little of the early twentieth century storefronts.

467 Edgewood Avenue, 1911. A two-story, brick commercial building with a shed roof and plain stone cornice. Main facade features a symmetrical, wood-and-glass storefront with a recessed entrance and a triple window at the second level. Fenestration on the east facade is irregular with a series of double windows at the second level. Painted wall signs are found throughout, see page 78.

476-480 Edgewood Avenue, 1909 (IDLCS# 90030). A large, two-story, brick commercial block with a shed roof and stepped parapet. Three wood-and-glass storefronts face Edgewood and are capped with a stamped-metal cornice. Second floor includes arched windows paired within a large brick arch. Elaborate brickwork is found throughout, see pages 80-81.

482 Edgewood Avenue, 1908 (IDLCS# 90031). A one-story, brick commercial building with a shed roof and parapet. Symmetrical wood-and-glass storefront is surmounted by a stamped-metal cornice and decorative brick entablature, see page 79.

483 Edgewood Avenue, 1908. A two-story, brick commercial building with a shed roof and corbeled brick cornice. Wood-and-glass storefront and tiled, recessed entrance is flanked by entrance to second floor. Three double windows at the

second level feature stone sills and lintels above. The building has been rehabilitated.

485 Edgewood Avenue, 1908. A two-story, brick commercial building with a shed roof and corbeled brick cornice. Wood-and-glass storefront with recessed entrance is flanked by entrance to second floor. Three double windows at the second level feature stone sills and brick lintels.

487 Edgewood Avenue, 1909. A two-story, brick commercial building with a shed roof. Wood-and-glass storefront with recessed entrance is flanked by entrance to second floor and framed by stamped-metal piers and cornice. Second level contains two triple windows. Entablature is covered with sheet metal and two rear windows have been bricked-in.

488 Edgewood Avenue, 1909 (IDLCS# 90035). A two-story, brick commercial building with a shed roof and corbeled brick cornice. Wood-and-glass storefront with recessed entrance is flanked by entrance to second floor. Symmetrical wood-and-glass storefront is capped by a stamped-metal cornice. Two double windows at second level contain segmental brick arches and stone sills. Evidence of painted wall sign on east elevation. Rehabilitated ca. 1986.

489 Edgewood Avenue, 1909. A two-story, brick commercial building with a shed roof and corbeled brick cornice. Wood-and-glass storefront with recessed entrance is flanked by entrance to second floor and framed by stamped-metal piers and cornice. Second level contains two triple windows with stone sills and lintels. Entablature features corbeled and panelled brick elements.

510 Edgewood Avenue, 1947 (IDLCS# 90037). A two-story, flat-roofed, brick-and-concrete-block International style building with a gable-roofed, concrete-block structure at rear. A central tower is flanked by two wings, containing multiple roof levels, ribbon windows, boxed overhangs, white-stuccoed wall surfaces and a recessed main entrance. The base of the building and elements of the tower are constructed of red brick with flush vertical joints and bands of darker brick, more characteristic of the Prairie style. International style buildings are rare in Atlanta.

537-541 Edgewood Avenue, 1906. A two-story, brick commercial building with a shed roof and stamped-metal cornice. Storefront is obscured by metal security grate. Second floor contains a three-part, basket-arched window flanked by narrow, sash windows. Elaborate ornamentation includes a machicolated brick cornice and terra-cotta rondels, finials and egg-and-dart motifs.

53 Hogue Street, 1940 (IDLCS# 90041). A one-story frame duplex with a recessed porch and a roof that is hipped at the rear and a clipped gable at the front. Porch is supported on square posts and has a plain stick balustrade.

14 Howell Street, ca. 1927 (IDLCS# 90042). A one-story frame duplex with a front-facing gable roof and cross gables on each side. The porch across the front is carried on wood posts with molded capitals. Knee braces are present under the projecting eaves of the facade.

24 Howell Street, ca. 1895 (IDLCS# 90043). One-and-one-half story frame house with steeply pitched, front-facing, clipped gable roof, and a three-part window in the gable end. Alterations include two shed-roofed dormers, an enclosed, concrete-replacement porch, a carport added to the north side, and asbestos shingle siding.

28 Howell Street, ca. 1895 (IDLCS# 90046). One-and-one-half story frame house with steeply pitched front-facing clipped gable roof. Massing is identical to 24 Howell Street, but a rear addition is present and the gable windows have probably been covered. Full-facade porch has square posts with capitals, turned balustrade, and decorative brackets.

54 Howell Street, 1931 (IDLCS# 90044). Utilitarian two-story frame apartment building with side gable roof and full-facade two-story porch supported by brick posts. Rafter ends and knee braces appear in gable ends. Partially enclosed back porch. Severely fire damaged, with doors and windows boarded up. Rehabilitation was ongoing at time of survey.

483-485 Old Wheat Street, ca. 1905 (IDLCS# 23366). Hip-roofed frame double shotgun house with parallel hip-roofed entry porches. House is vacant and threatened by lack of maintenance, but fabric is present for use in future rehabilitation. Some porch posts are missing and balustrades are replacements.

487-489 Old Wheat Street, ca. 1905 (IDLCS# 23369). Hip-roofed frame double shotgun house with parallel hip-roofed entry porches. House is vacant and threatened by lack of maintenance, but retains fabric for use in future rehabilitation. Porch roofs and brackets are all that remain of porches. Some weatherboards have fallen off at
rear.

Landscape Features

Alley running south from Auburn Avenue between 493 and 497 Auburn, ca. 1911 (IDLCS 90057). A sixteen- to twenty-foot-wide alley, currently paved with asphalt, that likely was unpaved through much of its history.

Brick sidewalk, north side of Auburn Avenue east of Howell, ca. 1890-1920 (IDLCS# 90059). A herringbone brick sidewalk with a granite curb. Sidewalk is approximately 165 feet long and nine feet wide.

Brick sidewalk, west side of Howell Street north of Auburn Avenue, ca. 1895-1922 (IDLCS# 90060). An approximately 40-foot segment of herringbone brick sidewalk with a granite curb. The pavement is approximately six feet wide.

Pea-gravel sidewalk, north side of Auburn Avenue between Boulevard and Howell Street, ca. 1922-1923 (IDLCS# 90058). The sidewalk is composed of a brown pea-gravel aggregate, with a granite curb. The pavement is approximately nine feet wide.

Noncontributing Properties

449 Auburn Avenue, 2 buildings, 1971-1981.
492-494 Auburn Avenue (IDLCS# 90006)
531 Auburn Avenue, 2 buildings, 1954
19-29 Boulevard, 3 buildings
421-429 Edgewood Avenue, 1946
428 Edgewood Avenue
462 Edgewood Avenue, 1927
479 Edgewood Avenue, 1932
484 Edgewood Avenue, 1908
494 Edgewood Avenue
501 Edgewood Avenue
502-504 Edgewood Avenue
509 Edgewood Avenue
513 Edgewood Avenue, 1920
520 Edgewood Avenue
521 Edgewood Avenue
525 Edgewood Avenue, 1948
528 Edgewood Avenue
536 Edgewood Avenue, 1951
479-481 Old Wheat Street, ca. 1905

Statement of Significance

This study will assess and evaluate the Site's historic resources in relationship to three historic contexts. These contexts correspond closely to historic themes identified by the NPS and the Georgia SHPO. The thematic framework of the NPS is outlined in *History and Prehistory in the National Park System and the National Historic Landmark Program.* In addition to general historical themes like "Architecture" or "Commerce," the Georgia SHPO has identified twelve distinctive aspects of Georgia history. These aspects are currently undeveloped and have been considered for the following contexts.

The following three historic contexts were developed for this nomination:

A. The Development of a Black Community and Leader: Atlanta's Auburn Avenue Neighborhood and Martin Luther King, Jr., 1906-1948

B. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Leadership of the American Civil Rights Movement, 1955-1968

C. Architectural Resources of the Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site, ca. 1880-1950

Context A, "The Development of a Black Community and Leader: Atlanta's Auburn Avenue Neighborhood and Martin Luther King, Jr., 1906-1948" relates to the NPS subtheme "Ethnic Communities" of Theme XXX, "American Ways of Life." Context A also relates to two aspects of Georgia history: "Large Black Population and Strong Cultural Presence" and "Conflict and Accommodation in Race Relations." Context A addresses the physical, social, and economic environment in which Martin Luther King, Jr., was reared. The Site embraces only a portion of the Auburn Avenue neighborhood, while the geographical area for this context encompasses an area akin to the Preservation District. Subthemes within this context include urban life, ethnic community growth and isolation, and occupational and class distinctions. The context begins in 1906, the year a bloody race riot signalled increased racial segregation patterns among black and white Atlantans, both residentially and commercially. The context ends in 1948, the year that King left Atlanta to pursue his education at Crozer Seminary in Pennsylvania.

Context A will briefly summarize the development of the Auburn Avenue black neighborhood. The context then will address the influence of the community on the intellectual and moral development of Martin Luther King, Jr. Throughout the period of significance, Auburn Avenue between Pryor on the west and Randolph on the east was the focus of Atlanta's east-side black community. Many of the churches, businesses, and other institutions of key importance to the Auburn Avenue black community are located outside the boundaries of the Martin Luther King, Jr., Historic Site. Thus, a discussion of these community

institutions is essential in establishing this context, but only those historic resources that lie within the historic site will be evaluated in relation to this context. Resources in this context are evaluated at the local and national levels of significance.

Context B, "Martin Luther King, Jr., and the American Civil Rights Movement, 1955-1968" is closely related to the NPS subtheme "Civil Rights Movements" under Theme XXXI, "Social and Humanitarian Movements." Context B relates to the Georgia SHPO contextual theme "Major Theater for Civil Rights Movement." Context B corresponds to the period during which King was a nationally prominent civil rights leader. King's civil rights activity in Atlanta during the period was limited primarily to his involvement with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), Ebenezer Baptist Church, local lunch counter sit-ins, and a labor dispute at Scripto, Inc. Events occurring across America, many involving King, are important in establishing this context and will be briefly sketched. The context begins with the Montgomery, Alabama, bus boycott led by the city's religious leaders, including King, and ends with his death in Memphis, Tennessee. Resources in this context are evaluated at the national level of significance.

Context C, "Architectural Resources of the Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site, ca. 1880-1950" relates to NPS theme XVI, "Architecture" and to the Georgia SHPO historical theme, "Architecture."[18] Context C addresses buildings possessing local architectural significance recognized under Criteria C. The context commences with the earliest building construction date within the Site. All buildings constructed prior to 1950 were surveyed; however, only in exceptional cases are buildings less than fifty years old eligible under this context. The Site's architectural resources represent residential and commercial buildings common in urban areas in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Few of these resources exhibit high-style architectural features, but they serve as good examples of local adaptations of popular methods of construction which often incorporate elements of nationally popular architectural styles. Resources in this context are evaluated at the local level of significance.

---

[18]"Georgia Historic Resources Survey Manual" (Atlanta: Historic Preservation Section, Parks and Historic Sites Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, n.d.), 38-39; *History and Prehistory in the National Park System and the National Historic Landmarks Program* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1987), I-16, I-20, I-21.

A. The Development of a Black Community and Leader: Atlanta's Auburn Avenue Neighborhood and Martin Luther King, Jr., 1906-1948

1. Context Narrative

During Martin Luther King, Jr.'s youth, Atlanta's Auburn Avenue neighborhood was a vital, largely self-contained black community.[19] A product of segregation, the community included laborers and domestic workers as well as successful professionals and businessmen. King grew up understanding both the limits imposed by segregation and the achievements that blacks accomplished in spite of it. The Auburn Avenue environment helped shape King's mature views on racial harmony and social justice.

The Auburn Avenue community developed against a backdrop of increasingly rigid, legally enforced racial segregation and the effective disfranchisement of blacks throughout the American South in the 1890s and 1900s. Following the end of Reconstruction in 1877, inconsistency and flux characterized southern race relations. Before 1900, few southern states required segregation in public places. Separation in public activities was common, but local racial protocol varied considerably. In urban areas, limited racial mixing on public carriers, in common areas, and even in work places testified to the fragile foothold that blacks had established in municipalities. The political participation of southern blacks also varied considerably in this period. Beginning in the 1890s, however, southern whites fashioned a strictly segregated public realm and eliminated blacks' civil and political rights.[20] In Atlanta, a 1906 race riot accelerated the development of separate spheres for blacks and whites in the city.

The Fifteenth Amendment, ratified in 1870, prohibited the denial of the franchise "by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude."[21] However, when the protection of federal troops was withdrawn, blacks' voting rights increasingly were restricted through intimidation, restrictive legislation, and discriminatory practices. Whites employed

---

[19]This context addresses the historic Auburn Avenue black community, encompassing the Site itself and adjacent areas of the Preservation District.

[20]C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, 3rd rev. ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), 33, 44, 97; John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss, Jr., *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of Negro Americans*, 6th ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988), 231-37.

[21]Richard Bardolph, "Fifteenth Amendment," in *The Encyclopedia of Southern History*, ed. David C. Roller and Robert W. Twyman (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979), 43.

numerous devices to disfranchise blacks without openly flouting the Fifteenth Amendment. Southern governments created all-white primaries, poll taxes, literacy tests, and complicated voting procedures to exclude black voters. Many of these measures also limited the franchise of less affluent whites, in spite of mitigating efforts like "grandfather clauses." Grandfather clauses sheltered illiterate whites by exempting from literacy requirements individuals whose ancestors had voted prior to emancipation. By 1910, nearly all southern states had enacted suffrage laws that prevented most blacks from voting.[22]

In Atlanta, whites limited black political participation as early as 1872. That year the city's Democratic Party adopted the white primary, excluding blacks from this preliminary selection process.[23] Following the decline of the Republican Party in the South, nomination in a Democratic primary usually assured victory in the general election. Although blacks in Georgia were generally excluded from Democratic primaries, their votes were occasionally sought, and often manipulated, in close contests. In the 1890s, the rise of the Populist Party led to increased competition for southern black votes. Georgia disfranchisement policies wavered as Populist and Democrat candidates vied for urban and rural black votes in 1892, 1894, and 1896. Shortly thereafter, Georgia whites, uncomfortable with black political power, especially in close elections, resumed efforts to effectively disfranchise blacks. This was accomplished in an amendment to the state constitution ratified by referendum in 1908. The primary motivation was to prevent blacks from voting in state and national contests. Even after this date, some blacks were able to vote in Atlanta municipal elections.[24]

By 1900, increased efforts to codify segregation practices accompanied disfranchisement measures. The Federal Civil Rights Act of 1875 prohibited segregation on steamboats, railroad cars, hotels, theaters, and other places of entertainment, but it was rarely enforced. In October 1883, the U.S. Supreme Court declared the act's enabling clauses unconstitutional, nullifying its effectiveness. In 1890, the court went further and upheld a Mississippi law mandating "separate but equal" accommodations for black and white railroad passengers. In 1896, the Court in *Plessy v. Ferguson* sanctioned the same principle of racial separation in education. Following these rulings, southern

---

[22]Franklin and Moss, 235-38.

[23]Andy Ambrose, et al., Part I, 3-5.

[24]Ambrose, et al., Part I, 3-1 - 3-12; John Hope Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of Negro Americans,* 3d ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967), 336-37; Horace C. Wingo, "Race Relations in Georgia, 1872-1908," (Ph.D. diss., University of Georgia, 1969), 72-90.

states enacted numerous segregation or "Jim Crow" statutes limiting black and white contact in most public places.[25]

Atlanta's Auburn Avenue reflected the changing nature of southern race relations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As was typical in newer postbellum southern cities, Atlanta blacks were clustered residentially in a number of distinct settlements. Many black neighborhoods were in less desirable low-lying areas or near railroad tracks. However, Atlanta neighborhoods and blocks were less rigidly segregated from 1870 to 1890 than they were after 1900, when Jim Crow was more firmly established. De facto residential segregation existed in the late nineteenth century but was not uniform. After 1900, as Atlanta grew and white hostility increased, the color line became firmly drawn.[26]

Auburn Avenue was opened in 1853 as Wheat Street, named for Augustus M. Wheat, a white merchant. The street runs east from Whitehall Street in downtown Atlanta. The Atlanta City Council renamed the street in April 1893 at the request of residents who thought Auburn Avenue sounded more stylish.[27] Between the 1850s and 1906, Auburn Avenue developed primarily as a white residential and business district that included a substantial black minority.[28] From 1884 to 1900, the racial make-up of the area bounded by Old Wheat Street, Howell, Edgewood, and Jackson (now a portion of the Site) remained substantially constant at approximately 55 percent white and 45 percent black.[29] As one study noted:

---

[25]Roger A. Fischer, "Segregation," in *The Encyclopedia of Southern History*, 1088-89; C. Van Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1951), 216.

[26]Dana F. White, "The Black Sides of Atlanta: A Geography of Expansion and Containment, 1870-1975," *The Atlanta Historical Journal* 26 (Summer/Fall 1982), 208-09.

[27]Franklin M. Garrett, *Atlanta and Environs: A Chronicle of Its People and Events* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1969), vol. II, 283.

[28]Alexa Henderson and Eugene Walker, *Sweet Auburn: The Thriving Hub of Black Atlanta, 1900-1960* (National Park Service, 1983), 5-10; Ambrose, et al., Part I, 2-4.

[29]Ambrose et al., Part I, 2-11; Michael Leroy Porter, "Black Atlanta: An Interdisciplinary Study of Blacks on the East Side of Atlanta, 1890-1930" (Ph.D. diss., Emory University, 1974), 118, 170-73.

> Interestingly enough, the old Fourth Ward, in which the Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site and Preservation District are located, not only had the greatest proportion of blacks in 1896 (46 percent of the ward's population), but the highest degree of integration as well (26 percent [of residences located adjacent to or across from a residence of another race]), a possible indication of the area's appeal to both blacks and whites.[30]

Around 1900, more blacks began to move to the Auburn Avenue neighborhood. This trend accelerated following the bloody September 1906 race riot, during which whites attacked many blacks and black-owned properties in downtown Atlanta and other neighborhoods. A riot relief committee reported that ten blacks and two whites died in the rioting, but contemporary observers put the death toll as high as 100. Black enfranchisement, racial fears, and black economic power were all factors involved in the build-up to the riot. The riot followed a Georgia election for governor in which both candidates, Hoke Smith and Clark Howell, appealed to anti-black sentiment. Both candidates had ties to Atlanta newspapers, which published a series of highly sensationalized accounts of alleged crimes by black males against white women. The month prior to the riot, one thousand delegates to the National Negro Business League convention had met in Atlanta, antagonizing some whites who resented successful blacks.[31]

Subject to increased hostility and rising rents for downtown retail and office space, black businessmen left the central business district and began to concentrate on Auburn Avenue between Courtland and Jackson streets. This area's growing black residential population provided a customer base for these businesses. By 1909, black residences outnumbered white residences along Auburn by 117 to 74, and the section of Auburn Avenue between Courtland Avenue and Jackson Street contained 64 black businesses. Once the Auburn Avenue black business area was established, the number of downtown black business concerns declined sharply.[32]

The Auburn Avenue black community emerged because rigid social and physical segregation denied blacks meaningful roles in white-dominated society. In Atlanta and elsewhere in the urban South, blacks developed and strengthened their own churches, businesses, social and cultural institutions, and social welfare agencies.

---

[30]Ambrose, et al., Part I, 2-4.

[31]Ambrose, et al., Part I, 1-19 - 1-20, 3-32 - 3-34; Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, 86-87; Wingo, 107-15.

[32]Ambrose, et al., Part I, 1-21; White, 212; Porter, 139, 141-148, 151, 157.

Between 1910 and 1930, the Auburn Avenue neighborhood became the center of Atlanta black life. Black Masonic leader John Wesley Dobbs tagged the area "Sweet Auburn," because its churches, homes, and commercial buildings were highly visible emblems of black achievement. The Avenue and its vicinity was the site of influential black businesses, churches, and a diverse black residential community. Businesses concentrated on Auburn west of Jackson, and residences lay east. After 1920, industrial concerns that presumably employed blacks, such as laundries and a pencil factory, located on Houston Street. Housing segregation confined blacks to limited areas in Atlanta, and working-class and middle-class blacks often lived side by side in the Auburn Avenue neighborhood. [33]

Small retail businesses, such as barber shops, cleaners and tailors, groceries, drugstores, and restaurants, shared the Avenue with substantial black-owned banks and insurance companies. The Atlanta Life Insurance Company began as a small mutual aid society founded by members of the Wheat Street Baptist Church in 1904. Purchased by black entrepreneur Alonzo Herndon in 1905 and combined by him with other small mutual aid societies, Atlanta Life became one of the largest black-owned proprietary companies in America.[34]

Auburn Avenue exhibited considerable social class and occupational diversity. From 1910 to 1930, many black teachers, clergymen, physicians, and businessmen lived in the community. The most prestigious addresses were on Auburn Avenue and on Houston Street, known as "Bishops Row," because it was home to several Methodist bishops employed at nearby Morris Brown College. Other prominent Auburn Avenue residents were Bishop Lucius H. Holsey of the Methodist Church, Charles L. Harper, the first principal of Booker T. Washington High School, and the Reverend Peter James Bryant of Wheat Street Baptist Church.[35] Domestic workers, laundresses, carpenters, and laborers also called Auburn Avenue home. Many laborers found employment in the industrial concerns along Houston Street. The neighborhood's housing stock reflected this diversity in employment. Two-

---

[33]Ambrose, et al., Part I, 1-33.

[34]Ambrose, et al., Part II, 1-9 - 1-10. In 1937, black businesses on Auburn Avenue included: Atlanta Life Insurance Co., 148 Auburn; Citizens Trust Company, 212 Auburn; Pioneer Savings Association, 160 Auburn; Afro-American Life Insurance Company, 241 Auburn; the *Atlanta Daily World*, 210 Auburn; Hopkins Book and Furniture Store, 141 Auburn; Aiken, Inc., contractors and builders; Blayton, Adair and Co., accountants; Haugabrooks Funeral Home, 368 Auburn; and The Top Hat Club (later the Royal Peacock), 184-186 Auburn (National Negro Business League, *1937 Directory and Souvenir Program*).

[35]Henderson and Walker, 16-17; Ambrose et al., Part I, 2-16 - 2-17, 2-34.

story Victorian houses, two-room shotgun cottages, and boarding houses shared Auburn Avenue addresses.

Black churches were the oldest and most important Auburn Avenue institutions. Baptist and African Methodist Episcopal churches dominated black community life, providing spiritual support to their members and meeting places for many community groups. Numerous social, cultural, and educational institutions and businesses, such as banks and life insurance companies, originated in church benevolent societies. Church leadership conferred great status and autonomy within the black community and often served as a conduit to the white power structure. Ministers led efforts to improve conditions in the community and served on the boards of black colleges, businesses, and social-service institutions.[36] Prominent Auburn Avenue churches included Wheat Street Baptist Church (founded 1870), Bethel AME Church (reorganized in 1865), Butler Street Colored (later Christian) Methodist Episcopal Church (founded 1884), First Congregational Church (founded 1867), and Martin Luther King, Jr.'s church, Ebenezer Baptist Church (founded 1886).[37]

Auburn Avenue boasted an array of organizations devoted to enriching the social, cultural, and social-welfare aspects of black life. These groups included women's clubs, an orphanage and school, social clubs, fraternal orders, libraries, and a YMCA. Large black fraternal orders, like the Odd Fellows, Masons, and Knights of Tabor, added self-help activities to their social and recreational concerns. Members of the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows participated in an insurance benefit program and could borrow money from the order to start businesses and purchase property.[38]

The chief rival to Auburn Avenue as a center of black life was the area surrounding the Atlanta University complex on the city's West Side. The site of several black colleges since the 1870s, the West Side in the 1920s began to attract middle-income blacks in search of new homes. Serious overcrowding in the Auburn Avenue neighborhood contributed to the shift to the West Side. By 1950, if not earlier, the West Side had replaced Auburn Avenue as the preferred residential address for relatively affluent blacks, but Auburn Avenue continued as a center of black business activity well into the 1950s.[39]

---

[36]Ambrose, et al., Part II, 2-1 - 2-2.

[37]Ambrose, et al., Part II, 2-1, 2-4, 2-8, 2-10, 2-12, 2-25.

[38]Ambrose, et al., Part I, 4-18 - 4-20.

[39]Ambrose, et al., Part I, 2-21 - 2-26; White, 218; C. T. Wright, "The Development of Public Schools for Blacks in Atlanta," *The Atlanta Historical Journal* 26 (Summer/Fall 1982), 115-16.

Martin Luther King, Jr., in the Auburn Avenue Neighborhood

Martin Luther King, Jr., lived within the Site until he was twelve and within the broader Auburn Avenue community until he was eighteen. The close-knit world of Auburn Avenue, with its emphasis on church and family and its pride in black self-reliance and achievement, profoundly influenced King. Martin Luther King, Jr., was born in a house at 501 Auburn Avenue (Birth Home) on January 15, 1929. The Reverend Adam Daniel Williams (known as A. D.) of Ebenezer Baptist Church, King's maternal grandfather, had purchased the house in 1909. King's father, Martin Luther King, Sr. (Daddy King), moved to the house in 1926, upon his marriage to Alberta Williams. The King family lived on Auburn Avenue until 1941, when they moved three blocks away to 193 Boulevard, near the intersection of Boulevard and Houston Street. This house, built about 1924 and occupied by a black physician, John W. Burney, from 1925 to 1939, is no longer standing and was located outside the Site's boundaries.[40]

In childhood, King observed blacks succeeding within the constraints of a segregated society. Daddy King's ministry gave the family many contacts with black community leaders. Black clergymen, educators, and businessmen often visited Ebenezer Church and the King home. Yet, the community housed a broad range of residents, and King's neighbors employed shovels and brooms as well as pens and cash registers. This environment exposed King to the richness and poverty of black community life.

From an early age, King resented the limitations segregation imposed on blacks, both within and outside his community. King attended Younge Street and David T. Howard elementary schools, both segregated institutions, and commuted on the backs of buses to Atlanta University Lab School and Morehouse College on the West Side of Atlanta. He received discriminatory treatment at downtown stores, movie theaters, and restaurants. One Georgia bus trip fixed the humiliations of segregation in King's mind forever. The driver ordered King and a high school teacher, returning from an oratorical competition, to give up their seats to whites. King later said he was never angrier than on that day.[41]

King also observed the efforts of his father and others to resist the inferior treatment of blacks. In his autobiographical work, *Stride Toward Freedom*, King related how his father forcefully objected when a white policeman called Daddy King a boy. On another occasion, the senior King stormed out of a downtown shoe store when asked to step to the rear of the store. King's father and grandfather both worked to register black voters; A. D. Williams's efforts

---

[40]Taylor Branch, *Parting the Water: America in the King Years, 1954-1963* (New York: Touchstone, 1989), 32, 37, 58; Atlanta City Directories.

[41]Oates, 9-10, 14-15.

helped defeat Atlanta school bond issues until they provided for a black high school. Daddy King was an active member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and helped lead efforts to equalize the pay of black and white school teachers, to establish Booker T. Washington High School (Atlanta's first public high school for blacks), and to desegregate elevators in the Atlanta courthouse.[42]

As the son and grandson of prominent Baptist ministers, King knew from personal experience the crucial role of the church in southern black life. Just two blocks west on Auburn Avenue, Ebenezer Baptist Church was a second home to young Martin Luther King, Jr. He spent all day Sunday and much of weekday afternoons and evenings at the church.[43] Prominent black clergymen from as far away as Chicago stayed with the Kings when in Atlanta. King's father was active in his church's national organization, the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., serving on its executive board.[44] Ministers had been leaders of the black community from slavery days and would play a leading role in the Civil Rights Movement.

King's background in the black Christian church also helped him to develop a moral basis for opposing segregation. Christian precepts of community, the redemptive power of suffering, and love for enemies provided the basis for King's philosophy of nonviolent resistance to discriminatory laws and customs. King's theological studies at Crozer Seminary and Boston University built on this early exposure to Christian principles at Ebenezer Baptist. Because of his background, King was able to call upon the images and metaphors familiar to millions of southern black churchgoers to rally support for the Civil Rights Movement. Old Testament themes of exile and eventual deliverance had special meaning for southern blacks, who often saw themselves as internal exiles. Black spirituals and gospel songs became mainstays of the Civil Rights Movement.[45]

---

[42]Malinda King O'Neal, ed., *Ebenezer, A Centennial Time Capsule, 1886-1986* (Atlanta: Ebenezer Baptist Church, n.d.), 3-7; Martin Luther King, Jr., *Stride Toward Freedom* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986), 20; Oates, 6-10: Ambrose, et al., Part II, 9-37.

[43]Oates, 4.

[44]Baldwin, 161, 207-08.

[45]Adam Fairclough, *To Redeem the Soul of America: The Southern Christian Leadership Conference and Martin Luther King, Jr.* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1987), 404.

The experience of growing up on Auburn Avenue firmly rooted Martin Luther King, Jr., in southern black culture. He learned of the diversity, triumphs, and failures of southern blacks. King used this experience to lead blacks in the struggle against segregation. The black church provided a community model that transcended class and status distinctions. King's youthful experience in the Auburn Avenue community helped shape his vision of a just interracial society.

Significance

The Birth Home is nationally significant under Criterion B (persons) as the birthplace and boyhood home of Martin Luther King, Jr., a nationally recognized civil rights leader. King's own autobiographical writings as well as the written and taped recollections of his father and sister document his childhood in this house. King's national significance as an adult civil rights leader is documented below in Context B. The Birth Home is also locally significant under Criterion A (events) as a component of the larger Auburn Avenue black community.

Ebenezer Baptist Church is nationally significant under Criterion B (persons) as a place where King spent much of his youth and where his mature beliefs and values began to take shape. Ebenezer Baptist Church is an extremely significant link to Martin Luther King, Jr.'s formative years. At Ebenezer, King learned the Christian doctrines that helped form the basis of his nonviolent opposition to racial discrimination. The Civil Rights Movement relied on themes and images common to the southern black Christian experience. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s exposure to southern black religious culture largely occurred at Ebenezer Baptist Church. King's youthful activities at Ebenezer are well documented in his autobiographical writings and in several biographies of King. King's later involvement with Ebenezer Baptist Church as co-pastor from 1960 to 1968 and the church's role as a site for numerous Civil Rights Movement conferences, meetings, and strategy sessions enhance the national significance of this resource under Criterion A (see Context B below). Ebenezer is also locally significant under Criterion A (events) as an important institution in the Auburn Avenue community.

Other residences within the Site, Fire Station Number Six, and landscape features such as historic sidewalks are contributing resources under Criteria A (events) and B (persons), because they represent the environment in which King grew up. The largely self-contained Auburn Avenue black neighborhood helped form King's character and influenced King's future development as a civil rights leader. The extant Site residences are physical links to the community that existed from 1929 to 1941.

The eligibility of these resources under Criterion C (design/construction) is considered below under Context C.

2. Criteria Considerations/Integrity

In general, birthplaces are eligible for National Register listing if the person is of outstanding historical importance and other appropriate sites connected with the individual's productive life are not available. For Martin Luther King, Jr., Congress specifically authorized the protection and interpretation of King's birthplace as part of the Site. King is unquestionably of national historical importance as a civil rights leader.

The NPS has restored the interior and exterior of the Birth Home to represent its appearance during King's years of residence. The Birth Home possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The essential physical features that defined the appearance of the house in 1929-1941 are intact.

Church properties usually are eligible for National Register listing only if their significance derives primarily from architectural or historical importance, independent of the property's religious function. Ebenezer Baptist Church has historical importance in relationship to Context A both as an institution of great importance to the Auburn Avenue black community and as a place where Martin Luther King, Jr., spent much of his youth. King became historically important as a national civil rights leader, not as a pastor. The influences that shaped King's career as a civil rights leader are represented in Ebenezer Baptist Church.

Ebenezer Baptist Church possesses a high degree of integrity. The exterior and interior are substantially as they were from 1929 to 1941. Exterior materials, window and door openings, decorative brick work, and stained glass windows are unchanged. The addition of an education building in 1956 and a minor 1971 addition to the south facade of the church are changes with minor visual impact. The education building has significance under Context B as the site of important events connected with the Civil Rights Movement. Ebenezer Baptist is in current use as a church and is instantly recognizable as such. It possesses integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and setting. It also retains considerable integrity of setting, although surrounding land use has changed somewhat from residential to institutional (King Center and community center).

To qualify as contributing resources, Site residences must have been present during the period (1929-1941) that Martin Luther King, Jr., lived within the Site. Residences on the Birth Block or near enough to it to have been an important part of King's youthful environment are evaluated under this context. Because residences are primarily significant under this context for associative characteristics rather than for design, a considerable degree of alteration or deterioration may be present without defeating eligibility. Much of the housing stock within the Site has deteriorated since 1941, detracting from the

integrity of design and workmanship in some cases. Some single-family houses have been converted to multiple occupancy; nonhistoric exterior treatments, such as asphalt siding, have been applied to some structures; and some original architectural details have been removed or replaced. To be eligible as a contributing resource, enough original fabric should remain to permit a residence, after exterior rehabilitation, to adequately represent the appearance of the neighborhood in the 1929-1941 period.

Some residences within the Site are not eligible as contributing resources under this context because they lack integrity. More than 75 percent of the original fabric of 492-494 Auburn had to be replaced, making this structure a reconstruction and therefore ineligible. 18 Howell, which has suffered years of structural and architectural deterioration and a fire, does not retain sufficient integrity to qualify as a contributing resource. In addition, 479-481 Old Wheat Street, through various alterations over the years, has lost most of its distinctive architectural decorative features such as the porch millwork. It also has a concrete porch and has been converted to a single-family residence.

3. Contributing Properties under Context A

Nationally Significant

Ebenezer Baptist Church, 407-413 Auburn Avenue (1914-1922)
Birth Home, 501 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1894)

Contributing to the Site's National Significance

472-474 Auburn Avenue (1905)
476-478 Auburn Avenue (1905)
480-482 Auburn Avenue (1905)
484-486 Auburn Avenue (1905)
488-490 Auburn Avenue (1905)
491-493 Auburn Avenue (1911)
493 Auburn Avenue, Rear, units 1-6 (1911)
497 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1900) and back yard shed/garage (ca. 1933-1935)
503 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1895) and granite front yard steps (ca. 1895-1915)
506 Auburn Avenue (1933)
510 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1890)
514 Auburn Avenue (1893)
515 Auburn Avenue (1909)
518 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1893) and front walk (ca. 1895-1915)
521 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1886) and front walk (ca. 1890-1915)
521½ Auburn Avenue (ca. 1920)
522 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1894)
526 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1895)

530 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1895) and iron fence (ca. 1895-1915)
535 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1895)
540 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1890)
546 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1890)
550 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1890)
Fire Station Number Six, 37-39 Boulevard (1894)
53-55 Boulevard (1905)
483-485 Old Wheat Street (1905)
487-489 Old Wheat Street (1905)
53 Hogue Street (ca. 1940)
14 Howell Street (ca. 1927)
24 Howell Street (ca. 1895)
28 Howell Street (ca. 1895)
54 Howell Street (ca. 1931)

4. Noncontributing Properties

492-494 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1897), a reconstruction managed as a cultural resource
479-481 Old Wheat Street (1905)

B. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Leadership of the American Civil Rights Movement, 1955-1968.

1. Context Narrative

This context briefly reviews the origins of the American Civil Rights Movement and provides an overview of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s career as a civil rights leader. The Civil Rights Movement encompassed many desegregation demonstrations and campaigns in diverse locations across the American South. Dr. King participated in many of these campaigns, while residing in Montgomery, Alabama (1954 to 1960), and Atlanta (1960-1968). Atlanta was also the headquarters of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, an important civil rights organization headed by King from 1957 to 1968. The period of significance begins in 1955, when King became the leader of a movement to boycott segregated buses in Montgomery, Alabama, and ends in 1968, the year of King's death.[46]

[46]A more detailed account of King's civil rights activities can be found in *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954-1963* by Taylor Branch, *To Redeem the Soul of America: The Southern Christian Leadership Conference and Martin Luther King, Jr.* by Adam Fairclough, *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference* by David J. Garrow, and *Let the Trumpet Sound: The Life of Martin Luther King, Jr.* by Stephen B. Oates.

American Civil Rights Movement

Although the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), founded in 1909, had worked for decades to secure black civil rights, several factors infused black civil rights campaigns with new vigor and made national politicians more receptive to black demands following 1945. The experience of blacks in World War II, the increasing political power of blacks in northern cities, the willingness of some black ministers to more aggressively attack segregation, and the role of a new communications medium—television—in exposing Americans to the plight of blacks in the segregated South all influenced the postwar racial climate.[47]

As the United States slowly emerged from the Great Depression and prepared for the possibility of war, black leaders lobbied for equitable treatment of blacks in the military and defense industries. In January 1941, A. Philip Randolph, President of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, an important black labor union, pressured the Roosevelt Administration to increase black employment in defense industries. Randolph began preparations for a mass protest march in Washington, D.C., with fifty to one hundred thousand black participants. President Franklin D. Roosevelt avoided the march by issuing Executive Order 8802 on June 25, 1941, banning employment discrimination by defense contractors. Approximately one million blacks served in the armed forces during World War II in segregated units, usually with white officers. But these men enjoyed greater opportunities to train as officers, pilots, and engineers than during previous conflicts. Black veterans returned from the war with broader horizons and enhanced self-confidence to press for full civil rights and an end to segregation.[48]

Legal racial segregation in public places continued after World War II throughout the South, where 70 percent of American blacks lived. In 1944, only 5 percent of black adults in the South were registered voters. The NAACP, led by blacks, spearheaded intensified challenges to segregation and disfranchisement and remained the dominant civil rights organization during the 1940s and 1950s.[49] While the NAACP concentrated on legal challenges through the courts, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), an interracial group founded in 1942, experimented with nonviolent sit-ins to protest discriminatory

---

[47]Sean Dennis Cashman, *African-Americans and the Quest for Civil Rights, 1900-1990* (New York: New York University Press, 1991), 89.

[48]Franklin, 573-78, 608.

[49]Franklin and Moss, 411; Homer C. Hawkins, "Negro Migration," in *The Encyclopedia of Southern History*, 892.

hiring practices at Chicago department stores. CORE, however, never gained a large following among blacks.[50]

The postwar federal courts and Democratic administrations were increasingly sympathetic to black concerns. The Democratic Party was becoming more dependent on black voters in northern cities and included in its ranks outspoken civil rights advocates like former first lady Eleanor Roosevelt and Minneapolis Mayor Hubert Humphrey. In 1944, the U.S. Supreme Court banned the all-white primary election, a device commonly employed in the one-party, Democratic South to exclude blacks from the political process. In 1946, President Harry S Truman appointed a biracial presidential commission that released a report, *To Secure These Rights*, which called for the elimination of segregation. The President issued an executive order in July 1948 desegregating the armed forces. A civil rights platform plank endorsed at the 1948 Democratic National Convention led to a walk-out by many Southern delegates and the creation of a third-party presidential ticket that carried four southern states. Also in 1948, the U.S. Supreme Court declared racially restrictive covenants in residential real estate transfers legally unenforceable. The covenants were widely used to prevent the sale of houses to nonwhites. In 1950, the Supreme Court ruled segregation on interstate railroad dining facilities unconstitutional.[51]

In the early 1950s, blacks were gaining political influence in parts of the South. By 1952, 20 percent of eligible southern blacks were registered voters, a fourfold increase over 1944. Blacks were elected to city councils in Winston-Salem (1947) and Greensboro, North Carolina (1951). Most registration gains came in the Upper South rather than in the Deep-South states, where entrenched legal hurdles, frequent and culturally sanctioned intimidation, and violence effectively crippled enfranchisement attempts.[52]

The most important legal defeat for segregation occurred in May 1954 when the U.S. Supreme Court unanimously ruled segregated public schools unconstitutional in *Brown v. Board of Education*—a group of consolidated cases the NAACP had been pursuing for years. The *Brown* decision greatly encouraged civil rights activists to expand their attacks on other aspects of segregation. It also intensified southern white resistance to integration.[53]

---

[50]Oates, 13-14; Fairclough, 2, 31; Franklin, 446-47, 608.

[51]Branch, 13; Franklin and Moss, 413; Fairclough, 15.

[52]Fairclough, 15.

[53]Branch, 112; Fairclough, 21.

Local desegregation campaigns launched the American Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s. In Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Montgomery, Alabama; and Tallahassee, Florida, blacks challenged segregation on city buses. Leadership of the bus boycotts quickly passed from teachers and other professionals to black clergymen. Black ministers, supported financially by their congregations, were less vulnerable to white economic reprisals. Churches also possessed unmatched prestige in the black community and controlled organizational assets. Church auditoriums and classrooms provided space for meetings, and mimeograph machines spread the message for mass actions.[54]

During the Civil Rights Movement, blacks relied less on traditional legal challenges to segregation and more on direct-action protests, often involving hundreds or thousands of demonstrators. Southern blacks in the 1960s protested with boycotts, sit-ins, and marches, risking arrest and beatings from white law-enforcement officers. The press carried news of any violent response by white authorities to a national audience. The new medium of television cast a particularly harsh light on the repressive tactics of southern officials and spurred reform efforts nationally. Civil rights leaders always hoped to extract concessions from local governments, but federal legislation, which tended to be more progressive and broad-based and more likely to be enforced, was usually more effective in accomplishing change. Civil rights campaigns in the 1960s aimed to influence national opinion as much as secure local concessions.

Civil Rights Leadership of Martin Luther King, Jr.

In 1954, the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama, hired Martin Luther King, Jr., as its pastor. Following his graduation from Crozer Seminary in 1951, King had worked toward a doctorate in comparative theology at Boston University. While in Boston, he met Alabama-born Coretta Scott, a music student at the New England Conservatory. The two were married on June 18, 1953. In Montgomery, King rapidly established his ministerial authority and expanded the church's existing social welfare program. He formed a social and political action committee, a committee to raise scholarship funds for black college students, and a cultural committee to encourage black artists. King joined the local chapter of the NAACP and the Alabama Council on Human Relations, one of the few interracial groups in the state. Within a year, King was known in the Montgomery black community as an activist and leader. NAACP members elected him to the Montgomery Chapter's Executive Board, and he served as vice president of the Montgomery Chapter of the Alabama Council on Human Relations.[55] In December 1955, Montgomery blacks chose King to lead their

[54]Fairclough, 14, 17-18.

[55]Martin Luther King, Jr., 25-32; Oates 35-45.

protest against segregated buses, beginning his career as a civil rights leader.

Montgomery blacks had long resented city ordinances that required segregation on buses and state laws that authorized drivers to enforce the ordinances. Throughout 1955, E. D. Nixon, a Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters official, and Fred Gray, one of Alabama's few black attorneys, sought a strong test case to challenge the laws. On December 1, 1955, Montgomery police arrested Rosa Parks for refusing to surrender her bus seat to a white, providing just such a case. Mrs. Parks, a respected seamstress and secretary of the Montgomery NAACP chapter, was of unimpeachable character and likely to make an excellent trial witness. Authorities charged Mrs. Parks with a violation of Alabama's segregation laws, but filed no disorderly conduct or other charges, opening the way for a direct challenge to the segregation laws. After her trial and conviction on December 5, 1955, Mrs. Parks agreed to appeal her conviction, thrusting her case into a national spotlight.[56]

E. D. Nixon and teachers from black Alabama State College organized a bus boycott to complement the legal challenge. On December 4, 1955, the first day of the boycott, Montgomery black leaders met to plan an evening mass meeting. In attendance were Nixon, Rufus Lewis, a funeral director and Nixon's rival for leadership of the black community, and a number of ministers including King and Ralph David Abernathy, pastor of First Baptist Church. The group created the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA) to coordinate the boycott and negotiate with the bus company. Lewis made a motion to name King president of the association, and he was elected without opposition.[57] In leading the MIA, King insisted on nonviolent protest, based on the principles of civil disobedience—many articulated by Henry David Thoreau and Mohandas Gandhi. Participants in the boycott were instructed on how to respond nonviolently to verbal and physical attacks. The Montgomery black community successfully maintained the boycott for more than one year. When Mrs. Parks's appeal became mired in the state courts, the MIA filed suit in federal court to overturn the state and local bus segregation laws. In November 1956, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled the Alabama and Montgomery bus segregation laws unconstitutional.[58]

King's boycott leadership propelled him to national prominence as a civil rights leader. From 1955 until his assassination in 1968, King led or provided

---

[56]Branch, 120-22, 128-31; David J. Garrow, *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference* (New York: Morrow, 1986), 11-14.

[57]Branch, 131-37.

[58]Branch, 158-59, 163, 193.

strong support to numerous campaigns and demonstrations for equal rights throughout the South. Many of these efforts were coordinated by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), an activist organization of Southern black clergymen King helped establish in 1957.[59]

The SCLC evolved from informal meetings and strategy sessions held by Southern black ministers concerning the Montgomery boycott. Ministers who attended the meetings included King, the Reverend C. K. Steele, who had helped lead the Tallahassee bus boycott, and the Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth of Birmingham, Alabama, who had founded the Alabama Christian Movement when the state effectively shut down the Alabama chapter of the NAACP. In December 1956, at Holt Street Baptist Church in Montgomery, King, Shuttlesworth, Steele, the Reverend Theodore Jemison of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, the Reverend Joseph E. Lowery of Mobile, Alabama, J. H. Jackson, president of the National Baptist Convention, and others held a week-long "Institute on Nonviolent Social Change."[60]

Encouraged by the interaction at these meetings and in response to suggestions from Bayard Rustin, a veteran pacifist organizer from New York, King, Shuttlesworth, and Steele issued invitations for an organizational meeting of the "Southern Negro Leaders Conference on Transportation and Nonviolent Integration" held at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta on January 10 and 11, 1957. Approximately sixty southern black ministers attended the organizational meeting, and, at a subsequent meeting in February, King was elected president. In August 1957 the group changed its name to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.[61]

Overshadowing other groups such as CORE and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the SCLC became "the sustaining mechanism of the Civil Rights Movement."[62] The SCLC sought to coordinate and raise funds, mostly from Northern sources, for local civil rights protests across the south and to develop and train black leaders. Emphasizing its roots in the church, the SCLC insisted on a commitment to nonviolence in all its endeavors. The SCLC was a loosely structured organization, with a fluctuating contingent of headquarters staff and field organizers. Black Baptist ministers dominated the organization's governing board and executive staff. To avoid direct competition with the NAACP, the SCLC did not accept individual memberships, but

---

[59]Oates, 119.

[60]Garrow, 81; Fairclough, 23.

[61]Fairclough, 29-32; Branch, 198-99; Garrow, 81-85, 90, 97.

[62]Fairclough, 2.

worked through local, dues-paying affiliates, most of which were black church groups.[63] Locally anchored, independently financed, and committed to a program of nonviolence, the SCLC proved effective after some initial faltering.

Martin Luther King, Jr., was the dominant personality within the SCLC. His national prestige, moving oratory, and experience with both southern black culture and northern intellectual circles made a uniquely successful combination. King moved easily between a rally at a rural black Baptist church in Alabama and a fund-raising dinner in New York City. Many staff and board members contributed to the SCLC's success, but during King's life, the SCLC was synonymous with him.[64]

The SCLC initially concentrated on local voter registration drives in the South, without significant success. Understaffed, chronically short of funds, and without a clear strategic direction, the SCLC achieved little in its first two years. In 1959, the group's executive board urgently requested that King "seriously consider giving the maximum of his time and energies" to the organization's work.[65] In response to this plea, King resigned his pastorate at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in 1960 and moved permanently to Atlanta. The King family—Martin, Coretta, and their two children, Yolanda and Martin Luther King III, moved into a small rented house on Johnson Avenue in Atlanta, near Ebenezer Baptist Church, but outside the current boundaries of the national historic site. The Kings later purchased a larger house on the city's west side, where King resided at the time of his death. While in Atlanta, the Kings had two more children, Dexter and Bernice. From 1960 to 1968, King devoted most of his energies to the SCLC and co-pastored with his father at Ebenezer Baptist Church, traveling much of the time.[66]

With King firmly in command, the SCLC figured prominently in many of the important civil rights campaigns of the 1960s. Local groups frequently called on King and the SCLC for counsel. In February 1960, college students from North Carolina Agricultural & Technical College staged sit-in protests at a whites-only Woolworth's lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina. Within six weeks, the sit-ins spread to dozens of cities across the South. In April, two hundred black college students met at Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina, to form the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). The SCLC helped underwrite the meetings, which King attended as an advisor and

---

[63]Fairclough, 2-7.

[64]Fairclough, 5, 38.

[65]Garrow, 102-04, 121.

[66]Garrow, 122-23; Oates, 64, 125, 149, 198, 215-16.

speaker. The SNCC avoided a formal alliance with the SCLC, but established its headquarters in Atlanta and officially recognized King as a permanent advisor.[67]

Following King's move to Atlanta, student leaders repeatedly urged him to join their efforts to desegregate local restaurants and stores. In October 1960, King participated in a desegregation protest at Rich's Department Store in downtown Atlanta. Atlanta police arrested King and thirty-five others on trespassing charges for refusing to leave the store's whites-only restaurant. Following this arrest, Georgia Judge J. Oscar Mitchell revoked King's probation on an existing charge of driving without a valid driver's license and sentenced him to four months at hard labor. Democratic presidential candidate John F. Kennedy telephoned King's wife Coretta to express his concern, also hoping to draw support from black voters. Kennedy's brother and campaign manager, Robert Kennedy, called Judge Mitchell, who then released King on bond. Upon his release, King addressed a rally at Ebenezer Baptist Church. He expressed his gratitude and esteem for Senator Kennedy, and Daddy King openly endorsed Kennedy's candidacy.[68] Although King made no formal endorsement, the Kennedy campaign publicized the two telephone calls to the black community nationwide, and Kennedy received 70 percent of the black vote in the November election.[69]

In May 1961, CORE began a series of Freedom Rides, attempting to enforce the desegregation of southern bus terminals ordered by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1960. At every southern bus stop, the riders attempted to use the whites-only facilities and to receive service at lunch counters. After a group of riders was brutally beaten by mobs in Alabama, King on May 20 addressed a rally in Montgomery, vowing to support a nonviolent campaign against the entire system of segregation in Alabama. A few days later, King presided at a meeting at Ebenezer Baptist Church where representatives of the SCLC, CORE, SNCC, and others formed the temporary Freedom Ride Coordinating Committee to coordinate support for the Freedom Riders. In late May, Attorney General Robert Kennedy ordered the Interstate Commerce Commission to draft regulations outlawing segregation in interstate bus facilities.[70]

In the summer of 1961, SNCC began organizing segregation protests in the southwest Georgia city of Albany, forming a coalition called the Albany Movement. In December 1961, with hundreds of protesters in jail and no money

---

[67]Branch, 271-72; Garrow, 131-34.

[68]Oates, 159; Garrow, 138-49.

[69]Branch, 351-78.

[70]Branch, 477; Oates, 168-71; Garrow, 154-61.

for lawyers, the Albany Movement requested King's help. Throughout the first half of 1962, protests coordinated by the SCLC, SNCC, and the local chapter of the NAACP continued in Albany. King participated in several demonstrations and spent time in jail. Albany's white leadership ordered mass arrests, which were accomplished without violence. Lacking brutal local opposition that aroused press interest and racked by internal divisions, the Albany Movement failed to gain any concessions on desegregation. The Albany experience was valuable. In subsequent campaigns, King and the SCLC attempted to operate where the black community was unified and where violent white response was likely to attract national attention.[71]

The Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights (ACMR), an affiliate of SCLC in Birmingham, began an effort to desegregate downtown stores in 1962. Blacks organized a boycott of stores to force negotiations. In December 1962, ACMR leader Fred Shuttlesworth persuaded King and the SCLC to agree to organize and lead a mass action campaign in Birmingham. During mass protest marches, Birmingham Police Commissioner Eugene "Bull" Connor unleashed fire hoses and police dogs on the youthful marchers. These tactics elicited widespread negative reaction when shown on national television. In May 1963, the city's white merchants agreed to desegregate fitting rooms, restrooms, and lunch counters and promised to improve black employment opportunities in stores.[72]

Capitalizing on the success of the Birmingham campaign, the SCLC joined forces with A. Philip Randolph, the NAACP, and other groups to organize a massive March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom on August 28, 1963. An immediate goal of the march was the passage of a civil rights bill that the Kennedy Administration had sent to Congress. Broader goals encompassed the elimination of all legal segregation and increased job opportunities for blacks. Labor leaders like United Auto Workers President Walter Reuther and prominent white religious leaders supported the effort. The march drew two hundred thousand participants and brought national attention to the civil rights struggle. The demonstration concluded with a rally in front of the Lincoln Memorial, where King delivered his "I Have a Dream" address, an impassioned plea for racial justice.[73]

President Kennedy's civil rights bill was stalled in Congress when he was assassinated in November 1963. Kennedy's successor, President Lyndon B. Johnson, strengthened the bill's provisions and engineered its passage in the summer of 1964. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibited racial discrimination

---

[71]Garrow, 173-80, 216-17.

[72]Garrow, 199, 229, 259-64.

[73]Garrow, 266, 278, 281-84.

in most public accommodations, banned employment discrimination, created the Equal Opportunity Commission, and denied federal funds to any activity where discrimination was practiced. King attended the bill's signing ceremonies in Washington in July 1964.[74]

During the late 1950s and early 1960s, King's international reputation grew. The NAACP bestowed it highest award, the Spingarn Medal, on King in 1957. By 1964, he had published *Stride Toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story* (1958) and *Strength to Love* (1963), a book of sermons. In January 1964, *Time* magazine named him its "Man of the Year" for 1963. In December 1964, King traveled to Norway to accept the Nobel Peace Prize, awarded for his nonviolent civil rights work.[75]

King's growing international stature did not preclude his involvement with local issues. In late 1964, King and SCLC participated in an Atlanta labor dispute that affected blacks living on the East Side. At issue was alleged racial discrimination by Scripto, Inc., a manufacturer of pencils, pens, and cigarette lighters. Founded in Atlanta in 1923, Scripto in 1931 built a manufacturing plant at 423 Houston Street, within the current Site boundaries. From the 1930s to the 1960s, Scripto expanded its operations, adding plant buildings between Houston and Irwin and constructing offices and research facilities at 150 and 160 Boulevard. By 1964, Scripto employed 950 workers. Some 633 of Scripto's 836 production and maintenance workers were black women. Many were residents of nearby residential areas.[76]

On November 27, 1964, Local 754 of the International Chemical Workers Union called a strike, alleging that Scripto's offer of a 4 percent raise to skilled workers and a 2 percent raise to unskilled workers was discriminatory. The union considered the offer unfair, because it believed Scripto refused to promote blacks to skilled positions. Only six of Scripto's 700 black employees were categorized as skilled workers. On November 30, Dr. King informed Scripto that the SCLC supported the strikers and threatened to lead a nationwide

---

[74]Garrow, 337; Ruth Cowart Wright, "Civil Rights Act of 1964," in *The Encyclopedia of Southern History*, 218-19.

[75]Garrow, 364-65, 728; Oates, 143-44, 271.

[76]Tom Greene, "Negro Chiefs Back Strike at Scripto," *Atlanta Journal*, November 30, 1964; James Walker, "SCLC Joins in Scripto Walkout," *Atlanta Journal*, Dec. 2, 1964; "Scripto, Union to Talk Anew," *Atlanta Daily World*, Dec. 13, 1964; Paul Troop and Ann Woolner, "Scripto Moves Plant to Suburbs," *Atlanta Journal*, Dec. 20, 1977; Atlanta building permit files at Atlanta Historical Society.

boycott of Scripto products if the strike remained unsettled.[77] The company countered that the issues were entirely economic, not racial. King was scheduled to address a rally of strikers at Mt. Zion Second Baptist Church on December 1, but flew to Washington to meet with FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover instead. The Reverend C. T. Vivian of SCLC substituted for King at the rally.[78]

A day after his return to Atlanta from the Nobel ceremonies in Oslo, King walked the picket line at Scripto for 30 minutes on December 19, 1964.[79] According to newspaper accounts, King walked the line with 15 others, including a representative from the union's international headquarters in Amsterdam. On Sunday, December 20, King addressed a rally attended by 250 striking Scripto employees at Ebenezer Baptist Church. King announced that the SCLC was proceeding with plans to implement a boycott of Scripto products. On December 24, union leaders and SCLC abandoned the boycott when Scripto agreed to pay Christmas bonuses to all employees. An agreement in principle between Scripto and the union appears to have been reached at this point, and newspaper accounts do not mention any strike-related activity by SCLC or King after December 24. Scripto and the union officially announced a strike settlement on January 9, 1965. The basis of the settlement was an across-the-board wage increase to all categories of employees. The Scripto plant remained in

---

[77]Dr. King was away from Atlanta for two weeks during the early part of the strike. King left Atlanta December 4 to receive the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo, Norway, stopping in London on the way, and in New York and Washington, D.C., on his return trip (Oates, 310-13).

[78]Walker; Greene; Troop and Woolner; "'Breadbasket' Asks Boycott of Scripto," *Atlanta Journal*, Dec. 10, 1964; "King Addresses Group Today on Current Strike," *Atlanta Daily World*, Dec. 1, 1964; "Strikers Meet Tuesday; Hear Pledge of Support," *Atlanta Daily World*, Dec. 2, 1964; Remer Tyson, "Union's Bias Charge False, Scripto Says," *Atlanta Constitution*, Dec. 23, 1964.

[79]Research to date has not indicated exactly where King walked the picket line on December 19. Newspaper accounts from other days, when King was not picketing, indicate that the area around Boulevard and Irwin was the focus of picketing. A large parking lot for Scripto employees was located on the north side of Irwin and would have been a logical site for pickets seeking to keep workers from breaking the strike. One article indicates that on some days, all buildings of the Scripto complex were picketed (Walker; "Scripto, Union Meeting Today," *Atlanta Daily World*, Dec. 3, 1964; "Bargaining Session to Be Held by Scripto and Union," *Atlanta Daily World*, December 20, 1964).

operation on Houston Street until December 1977, when operations moved to Gwinnett County.[80]

While the Scripto strike unfolded, King was planning a major civil rights campaign for Alabama. Throughout 1964, the SCLC and SNCC had been working independently to register voters in various Alabama counties. A coalition including the SCLC and SNCC concentrated its 1965 efforts in Selma, Alabama, where segregationist Dallas County Sheriff Jim Clark led the resistance. Large-scale demonstrations and mass arrests in Selma began in January and continued into March. King and other leaders planned a march from Selma to Montgomery for March 7, 1965, designed to draw attention to the refusal to register black voters. When the marchers reached the Edmund Pettus Bridge on the east side of Selma, state troopers and "possemen," deputized by Sheriff Clark, charged into the demonstrators, beating them with billy clubs and firing tear gas. Graphic national television coverage of the incident sparked widespread outrage.[81]

The repression of the Selma march brought growing numbers of supportive northern white clergymen and labor leaders to the city and increased pressure on President Lyndon B. Johnson and Congress to protect voting rights. On Monday evening, March 15, President Johnson appeared before Congress and a national television audience to introduce legislation that would send federal agents to the South to oversee voter registration. Protected by federalized National Guard troops and a court order, King led a march from Selma to Montgomery March 21 through March 25, which ended with a rally on the steps of the Alabama state capitol. The voting rights legislation was enacted in early August, with King attending signing ceremonies at the Capitol in Washington.[82]

Following the successful voting rights bill campaign, King and the SCLC increasingly turned their attention to the broader problems of poverty and unemployment, particularly in northern city slums. The SCLC continued its voter registration and leadership training work in the South but also mounted a

---

[80]Walker; Greene; Troop and Woolner; Tyson; "'Breadbasket' Asks Boycott of Scripto," *Atlanta Journal*, Dec. 10, 1964; "King Pickets Scripto Plant 30 Minutes," *Atlanta Journal*, Dec. 20, 1964; G. S. Carlson, "Must Fight for Better Jobs, King Tells 250 Scripto Strikers," *Atlanta Constitution*, Dec. 21, 1964; "Christmas Bonus Paid, Strikers Suspend Boycott of Scripto," *Atlanta Daily World*, Dec. 25, 1964; "Scripto Gives 900 Pay Hike," *Atlanta Journal*, Jan. 20, 1965.

[81]King did not participate in the March 7 demonstration, but two days later he led 2,000 marchers to the Pettus Bridge, where a confrontation was avoided by King's decision not to move beyond the bridge (Garrow, 371-404).

[82]Garrow, 405-12; Oates, 359-60.

major effort in Chicago in 1965-66. The SCLC joined a coalition of local groups called the Coordinating Council of Community Organizations to attack housing and employment discrimination, inferior public schools, and exploitive ghetto merchants. King moved to a Chicago slum apartment on a part-time basis to draw attention to ghetto conditions. King, SCLC staff, and local leaders led open-housing marches into all-white neighborhoods, frequently encountering hostile crowds. Confronting complex social and economic forces rather than legal segregation, the Chicago campaign had difficulty defining coherent goals. Movement leaders negotiated an agreement with city officials and real estate professionals on a limited number of housing issues, but implementation of the accord was slow. The narrow scope and vague wording of the agreement drew criticism from some commentators and civil rights leaders outside of the SCLC.[83]

Increasingly in the last two years of his life, King moved beyond attacks on segregation to focus on broader issues of economic justice and U.S. military involvement in Vietnam. In April 1966, the SCLC board approved a resolution condemning U.S. policy in Vietnam and urging serious consideration of a prompt withdrawal of forces.[84] King continued to speak out against the war in 1967 and 1968. In the fall of 1967, King and the SCLC began planning a "Poor People's Campaign" to dramatize the issue of poverty in America. For the first time, the SCLC attempted to create a national movement, rather than joining a preexisting local movement. The SCLC hoped to bring together blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans, and poor whites in the campaign. The SCLC's plans called for three caravans of the poor to march on Washington, D.C., from Mississippi, Milwaukee, and Boston in the spring of 1968. Once in Washington, the demonstrators would establish a temporary tent city to keep the problems of the poor before Congress and the nation. The SCLC hoped to influence Congress to pass legislation assuring full employment, a guaranteed annual income, and increased funding for public housing. King contemplated disrupting traffic and city services if orderly marches and demonstrations failed to move Congress.[85]

King's willingness to consider more aggressive forms of nonviolent protest reflected a growing controversy among blacks over the continued viability of the philosophy of nonviolence. As early as 1966, SNCC's Stokely Carmichael began to articulate a "Black Power" stance that emphasized gaining power for blacks by any means necessary. Frustrated by the slow progress of civil rights reforms and the perceived passivity of King's nonviolent approach in the face of white violence against blacks, many younger blacks embraced Black Power in

---

[83]Garrow, 456-59, 489-503, 527-30.

[84]Garrow, 469-70.

[85]Garrow, 579-600; Fairclough, 357-59.

the late 1960s. By 1968, leaders like Carmichael and H. Rap Brown openly scorned nonviolence and challenged King's leadership of the Civil Rights Movement. Adding to the national controversy over nonviolence were the riots in urban black ghettos that began in the Watts section of Los Angeles in the summer of 1965 and continued in Chicago in 1966, Detroit and Newark in 1967, and dozens of other cities. Increasingly in 1967 and 1968, King was attempting to guide a movement deeply divided over philosophy and tactics.[86]

In early 1968, King was devoting much of his time to recruiting for the Poor People's Campaign, when the Reverend James Lawson of Memphis, Tennessee, asked him to support a strike of black sanitation workers in that city. The sanitation workers had walked out in February 1968, because city officials refused to recognize their nearly all-black local of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees. The Community on the Move for Equality (COME) organization was formed to support the strikers. King was largely unaware of divisions within the Memphis black community between established clergy and NAACP officials and young Black Power adherents. On March 18, King addressed a rally of fifteen thousand strikers and supporters in Memphis. Ten days later, King led a march that turned violent. A small minority of demonstrators began looting, and police attacked both looters and peaceful demonstrators. Deeply alarmed by the eruption of violence, King vowed to return to Memphis and conduct a wholly peaceful march to vindicate his nonviolent beliefs.[87]

King arrived in Memphis on Wednesday, April 3, 1968, for talks with participants in a new march scheduled for Monday, April 8. Aides described King as depressed as a result of the violence that marked the previous march and the difficulties the SCLC was experiencing recruiting for the Poor People's Campaign. On Wednesday evening King addressed a small rally at the Memphis Mason Temple. The next evening, April 4, 1968, King was assassinated while standing on the balcony of his room at the Lorraine Motel. Blacks and whites alike reacted with sorrow and anger to King's murder. Rioting in 110 American cities left thirty-nine dead in the days following King's death.[88] Escaped convict James Earl Ray was tried and convicted of murdering King, although the question of whether Ray acted alone is still debated. The Reverend Ralph D. Abernathy succeeded King as president of the SCLC. Abernathy went ahead with

---

[86]Garrow, 439, 481, 573; Oates, 366-68, 387, 394-95, 401-9, 429, 453.

[87]Garrow, 604-13; Oates, 453-54, 459-64.

[88]Garrow, 619-23; Oates, 473-475.

the Poor People's Campaign in Washington, but failed to accomplish the campaign's goals.[89]

King's body was flown to Atlanta, where it lay in state at Sisters Chapel of Spelman College. On April 9, 1968, Ralph Abernathy, who had been with King since the Montgomery bus boycott days, conducted his funeral service at Ebenezer Baptist Church. Prominent civil rights leaders, black entertainers and professional athletes, and the four leading presidential contenders—Senator Eugene McCarthy, Senator Robert Kennedy, Vice President Hubert Humphrey, and Richard Nixon—attended the service. A crowd exceeding sixty thousand listened to the service over loudspeakers outside, and as many as fifty thousand joined in the funeral cortege from Ebenezer to the campus of Morehouse College. King's casket was borne on a farm cart drawn by two mules, symbolic of the Poor People's Campaign. At Morehouse, college president emeritus Benjamin Mays gave a brief eulogy before King was buried next to his grandparents at South View Cemetery.[90]

King's widow, Coretta Scott King, founded the Martin Luther King, Jr., Center for Nonviolent Social Change in order to carry on her husband's work and honor his memory. She purchased property on Auburn Avenue east of Ebenezer Baptist Church for this purpose. King's remains were moved to a commemorative site at the Center in 1971. The King Center complex was completed in 1981 and includes King's marble tomb and surrounding plaza, a library and archive, conference center, and exhibit areas.[91]

Significance

Most of the civil rights campaigns led by Martin Luther King, Jr., occurred outside Atlanta. Atlanta, however, was the headquarters of the SCLC, which King led from 1957 until his death, and King's home and base of operations from 1960 to 1968. During that period, King co-pastored at Ebenezer Baptist Church, participated in desegregation protests in the fall of 1960, and supported the 1964 strike at Scripto, Inc. Except for a brief period when they were in an office building at 43 Exchange Place in downtown Atlanta, SCLC offices have been on Auburn Avenue, first at 208 Auburn and currently at 334 Auburn in the

---

[89]Garrow, 385-86.

[90]Oates, 477-79; Ralph David Abernathy, *And the Walls Came Tumbling Down* (New York: Harper & Row, 1989), 456-65.

[91]Abernathy, 465; Bruce Keys, King Center for Nonviolent Social Change, telephone conversation, October 1, 1992; Bond & Ryder and Associates, "Project Summary, Martin Luther King Center for Social Change, Atlanta, Georgia," n.d.

Prince Hall Masonic Temple building, outside the Site but within the Preservation District.[92]

Ebenezer Baptist Church is closely associated with Martin Luther King, Jr.'s leadership of the American Civil Rights Movement. From 1955 to 1960, Martin Luther King, Sr., was Ebenezer's pastor, but his son, Martin Luther King, Jr., preached occasional guest sermons. From 1960 to April 1968, King, Jr., served as co-pastor of Ebenezer, usually preaching one or two sermons a month and performing pastoral duties. As Dr. King's national and international reputation grew, his sermons and speeches, which articulated his views on civil rights and other national issues, received increased attention from the press.

The SCLC was founded at meetings held at Ebenezer Baptist Church in January 1957. From 1957 to 1968, the church was the site of numerous SCLC executive staff and governing board meetings, as well as the 1967 SCLC annual convention. Ebenezer's large education building was especially useful for SCLC meetings. King attended an SCLC executive staff meeting at Ebenezer on March 30, 1968, less than a week before his death. Ebenezer's auditorium was used for rallies and mass meetings concerning local civil rights issues. On December 20, 1964, King addressed a meeting of striking black Scripto employees at Ebenezer.[93]

Ebenezer Baptist Church also symbolizes the crucial role of black ministers and black churches in the Civil Rights Movement. Black clergymen were prominent leaders of the movement and the dominant force behind the SCLC. Most affiliate members of SCLC were black church groups across the South. In almost all southern communities where civil rights campaigns were launched, black churches served as meeting places and command posts.[94] The Civil Rights Movement drew on the idealism, prestige, and organizational strengths of the southern black church. The participation of black ministers and congregations gave the Civil Rights Movement a mass base not present in earlier civil rights efforts. Before the 1950s, black lawyers, teachers, and other professionals had spearheaded attacks on segregation. The church drew members from across class lines and provided the numbers needed for effective mass action. Ebenezer Baptist is a physical reminder of the role black churches and ministers played in achieving for blacks the right to vote and ending racial segregation in public places in America.

The Scripto buildings along Houston Street are not eligible under this context. King and SCLC supported the striking black workers in 1964, but King's

---

[92]*Catalog of Historic Structures*, 23, 44; Garrow, 171, 200.

[93]Garrow, 573-74, 615; Fairclough, 51; Baldwin, 316.

[94]Fairclough, 12-13, 17-18, 32-34.

involvement on the picket line at the plant was minimal, amounting to 30 minutes on a single day at an undetermined location. The oldest portion of the Scripto complex at 423 Houston (built 1931) was likely not the focus of picketing activities, which seemed to center on a plant entrance on Irwin Street. King indicated his strike support most forcefully at a rally at Ebenezer and in his efforts to organize a boycott of Scripto products. Because of the rally, Ebenezer, a nationally significant resource under this context, is a resource that better represents King's role in the Scripto strike than the surviving plant buildings.

Ebenezer Baptist Church is locally significant under Criterion C (see Context C below).

2. Criteria Considerations/Integrity

Ebenezer Baptist Church is a religious property and eligible for the National Register only if its primary significance derives from its architectural, artistic, or historical importance. Its listing is clearly justified by its historic importance in connection with the Civil Rights Movement and the life of Martin Luther King, Jr. Although religious leaders figured prominently in the movement, they focused their efforts on political and social change.

A property significant for historical associations under Criteria A and B must retain the essential physical characteristics that defined its appearance during its association with the historic person or events. Ebenezer Baptist Church possesses integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The church also possesses substantial integrity of setting, although land use in the immediately surrounding area changed after 1968, with the construction of the King Center and a community center. The church is still used by the same congregation that built the structure. The exterior materials of the church, stucco and brick, are original. The addition to the chancel at the south end of the church, completed in 1970, has little visual impact and is not visible from Auburn Avenue. A new facade, erected in 1971, altered the appearance of the education building, but the building retains the same functions.

Martin Luther King, Jr.'s remains were moved to the King Center on Auburn Avenue in 1971. King's marble tomb was constructed in 1976, and the surrounding King Center complex was completed in 1981. Although the grave site falls outside of the period of significance for this context, the 1980 legislation that established the Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site included the place "where he is buried" among the resources to be protected and interpreted for future generations.[95] King's national

[95]Public Law 96-428.

importance, the clear Congressional intent to include the existing grave site, and the grave site's contribution to the commemorative purpose of the Site make it a nationally significant resource eligible under National Register Criterion B.[96] These factors also satisfy the requirements of Criteria Consideration C, which ordinarily excludes graves from eligibility. Although the grave site is less than fifty years old, it is of exceptional importance and therefore meets the standard of Criteria Consideration G, which governs properties that have achieved significance within the last fifty years. The grave site retains all aspects of integrity.

3. Contributing Properties under Context B

Nationally Significant

Ebenezer Baptist Church (1914-1922, 1956)
Martin Luther King, Jr., Grave Site (1976)

4. Noncontributing Properties

C. Architectural Resources of the Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site, ca. 1880-1950

1. Context Narrative

The following context demonstrates the diversity of style and type within the Site and how architectural resources and their settings convey historical meaning. The residential resources that dominate Auburn Avenue and the commercial structures along Edgewood Avenue each illustrate different patterns of urban growth, yet they share characteristics with other urban communities which emerged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The residential resources incorporate elements of identifiable national architectural styles, such as Italianate, Queen Anne, and Craftsman, which are applied to vernacular house types. The commercial and public resources apply elements of the Italianate, Romanesque Revival, Moderne, and International styles to nineteenth and early twentieth century brick commercial buildings. Regional influences also are evident, especially in form. Shotgun houses and gabled ells predominate. Porches constitute the largest common regional denominator. Most of the Site's resources are vernacular in character. They adapt stylistic elements to suit economy and decoration, and they are traditionally massed.

---

[96]The significance of the grave site was confirmed by the Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places in a memorandum to the Chief, Cultural Resources Planning Division, SERO, February 22, 1993.

In this context, the buildings within the Site are evaluated for significance in the area of architecture. No buildings within the Site have national significance under Criterion C, but many have local architectural significance. In general, the residential resources on Auburn Avenue illustrate the staged growth of the community and are visible evidence of its changing population. These resources retain a high degree of integrity, although their material condition varies considerably. The resources on Edgewood Avenue are more problematic because structural deterioration or destruction and modern intrusions have altered the corridor's historic fabric. However, the dominant historic commercial development of Edgewood Avenue is obvious, and most remaining buildings retain integrity.

Residential Architectural Resources

The architectural resources of the Auburn Avenue portion of the Site (which includes adjoining portions of Boulevard, Hogue, and Howell streets) are predominantly residential. The following discussion of the residential buildings of Auburn Avenue is organized chronologically. Site resources will be related to broader currents in American architecture from 1880 to 1950.

The two primary analytical categories for discussing American houses are styles and types. The concept of architectural style is a notoriously slippery one, embracing both the decorative treatment and the overall configuration or form of a house. Ornament is usually the clearest indicator of style, with form a secondary aspect. For example, the Italianate style is defined in terms of decoration (an elaborate cornice, heavy brackets, and molded window hoods), proportions (tall, narrow windows and doors), and typical forms (low-pitched roof, overhanging eaves, and towers). Stylistic analysis emphasizes successive style periods, bounded by approximate beginning and ending dates. The concept of style is most useful in discussing the unique designs of professional architects for affluent clients, representing perhaps 5 percent of American buildings. These are referred to as "high style" examples. The remaining 95 percent of buildings are usually classified as vernacular architecture.

House types, rather than styles, are the usual analytical categories applied to vernacular architecture. House types are identified on the basis of ground plan (e.g., square, rectangle, L-shape), number of stories, and roof configuration (e.g., hip, gable). An example of a house type is the gable front and wing house, or L-shaped house, defined by its L-shaped ground plan and cross-gable roof. The amount of ornament found on vernacular houses varies considerably. Examples of vernacular building types that incorporate ornament are widely viewed as borrowing these elements from high style architecture. Thus, a vernacular L-shaped house may have a cornice and brackets associated with the Italianate style.

Many terms describing house styles and types have gained nearly universal currency and will be used in this study. Auburn Avenue residences combine traditional massing (i.e., rectangular, L- shaped, square, or complex) common to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and elements of popular national architectural styles. At times, a house embodies both the massing and the decoration of a period and style. But most commonly, the houses along the Birth-Home Block are vernacular houses with various levels of stylistic decoration. Some Site resources, such as the double shotgun cottages, are best analyzed in terms of house type since their decorative elements are not rigidly defined by a dominant style. Other resources, such as the two-story houses on the Birth-Home Block, represent traditional Queen Anne massing and decorative elements. Most Birth-Home Block resources are not the works of an individual architect, and thus, they are typical of residential architecture in early twentieth century American cities.

Single-Family Residences--Italianate

The large single-family house at 521 Auburn, built in the 1880s and subsequently divided into apartments, is a Georgian cottage type (square massed) with Italianate stylistic details. The oldest extant Site building, the house was constructed on a large lot at a time when much of the surrounding land was undeveloped.

The Italianate style was popular for residences from approximately 1840 to 1880, with its greatest acceptance coming after 1860. The style originated in England in the early nineteenth century as part of the enthusiasm for the Picturesque. Devotees of the Picturesque rejected formality and classical symmetry and sought inspiration from exotic sources. Informal, asymmetrical Italian farmhouses were the inspiration for the Italianate and Italian villa styles in England and America. The architectural pattern books of Andrew Jackson Downing, first published in the 1840s and reprinted into the 1880s, helped popularize the Italianate style in America. The Italianate style combines both symmetrical and asymmetrical L- or T-shape plans and a tall tower. Builders soon applied Italianate details to traditional rectangular American house forms.[97]

Italianate houses typically had low-pitched roofs with broad overhanging eaves; elaborately molded cornices with heavy, often paired, brackets; tall, narrow windows, commonly with round or segmental arch heads; and frequently elaborate window crowns. Paired windows were common, and porches were almost always present, sometimes with ornate carved and turned balusters and posts. Examples

---

[97]Henry-Russell Hitchcock, *Architecture: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin, 1987), 158, 601; Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Knopf, 1984), 211-12.

of the style are not abundant in the South because the Civil War, Reconstruction, and the depression of the 1870s limited building activity in the region during the style's period of greatest popularity.[98]

The house at 521 Auburn Avenue exhibits Italianate decorative elements applied to a traditional vernacular house type. The Georgian cottage type has a long history in the South and is characterized by a square or nearly square plan, a central hall with two rooms on either side, exterior symmetry, and a height not exceeding one and one-half stories.[99] 521 Auburn Avenue does not display the asymmetry and two- to three-story height often associated with the Italianate style. Italianate features on the house include a molded cornice with heavy brackets, projecting bays at the sides with similar cornices and brackets, and hooded windows. The use of Italianate features on a house built when Auburn Avenue was semi-rural in character recalls the ultimate origins of the style in the farmhouses of the Italian countryside.

521 Auburn is set back farther from the street on a larger lot than its later neighbors. The front yard is dominated by two oak trees and is bordered by a hedge and a fence. The historic concrete front walk has distinct detailing that includes a diagonal scoring pattern and rolled curb-edge detail along the length of the walk. At the front northeast corner of the lot, behind the sidewalk, is a plain, rectangular frame building, constructed about 1920, that was operated by blacks as a soda fountain and cafe in the 1930s and may have had other commercial uses.[100] As the only extent store building within the residential portion of the Site, this structure is an important reminder of the diverse character of Auburn Avenue during the period of Dr. King's residence.

Queen Anne

As Atlanta outgrew its pedestrian limits in the 1890s, large, two-story houses were constructed on Auburn Avenue. Most of these single-family houses, including the Birth Home and its neighbors, incorporated features associated with the Queen Anne style. Queen Anne is a stylistic term that incorporates decorative elements and house typology. A defining characteristic of the style is complex massing and multiple roof forms. Other Site houses from the 1890s

---

[98]McAlester and McAlester, 211-12; John J.-G. Blumenson, *Identifying American Architecture: A Pictorial Guide to the Styles*. 2d ed. (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1981), 37.

[99]*Georgia's Living Places: Historic Houses in Their Landscaped Settings* (Atlanta: Historic Preservation Section, Division of Parks, Recreation & Historic Sites, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, 1991), I-26.

[100]*Catalog of Historic Structures*, 74.

are examples of vernacular gable front and gable-front-and-wing houses (gabled-ell) with Queen Anne style decorative elements.

The Queen Anne style was popular nationally from approximately 1880 to 1910. The style originated in the 1860s and 1870s with the English designs of Richard Norman Shaw, W. Eden Nesfield, and others. These architects revived late medieval and early Renaissance forms and materials, such as half-timbering, casement windows, elaborate brick chimney pots, gable-end barge boards, and ceramic tile cladding of exterior walls, and used them in novel combinations. Henry Hobson Richardson's 1874 Watts Sherman House in Newport, Rhode Island, generally considered the first American example of the Queen Anne style, incorporated many of these features. The influential designs of Shaw and Richardson were expansive and manorial, but the vast majority of American Queen Anne houses were modest wooden structures built for the middle class.[101]

American Queen Anne houses achieved dramatic visual effects through the use of contrasting textures, colors, shapes, and materials. Characteristics are irregular, asymmetrical plans; hipped roofs with lower cross gables; projecting features such as bays, turrets, and gable overhangs; elaborate wooden millwork; and the use of textured decorative shingles on exterior walls. Porches were nearly universal and often wrapped around one or both sides of a house. Queen Anne house plans were usually asymmetrical, with an off-center entry and an informal arrangement of rooms. Builders' pattern books helped popularize the style nationally, and railroad transportation made available the mass-produced wooden ornament typical of the style.[102]

Birth Home

The Birth Home at 501 Auburn, built circa 1894 for a white family named Holbrook and restored by the NPS, is a good example of a two-story middle-class house incorporating Queen Anne elements. In plan, the house is an elongated rectangle with shallow projections on all four sides. The principal roof is hipped, with gable roofs over the projections. The asymmetrical facade is dominated by a front-facing gable and a one-story, full-width porch that wraps partly around the west side of the structure. The porch has turned posts, scrollwork brackets, and a simple openwork balustrade. Paired double-hung windows with louvered shutters are present at the first and second floors under the gable end, which contains a rectangular vent and is bordered below by a pent roof. To the right of the entrance is a circular window. At the second

---

[101]Hitchcock, 291-94, 364; McAlester and McAlester, 263-68.

[102]McAlester and McAlester, 263-68; Mary Mix Foley, *The American House* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980), 175-76; Carole Rifkind, *A Field Guide to American Architecture* (New York: New American Library, 1980), 63-65.

floor, above the entrance, is a small porch with a shed roof. The porch was originally accessed by a door, which was converted to a double-hung window before 1929. The house has weatherboard siding, with decorative shingles in the gable ends.[103]

The Birth Home is set on a typically long and narrow urban lot forty feet wide and 195 feet deep. The house is set back thirty-eight feet from the front lot line and is reached by a walkway of octagonal pavers. A concrete block retaining wall, approximately two feet high, separates the elevated front yard from the sidewalk. A privet hedge, approximately three feet high, is planted on top of the wall and encloses the front yard. The east side yard of the Birth Home shares a driveway with 503 Auburn Avenue. A shed, which no longer exists, sat on the east side of the back yard and was converted to a garage by the King family when they bought a car. Other back yard features no longer extant include a vegetable garden on the east,[104] another small shed behind the garden, which served as a coal shed, and wire clotheslines that ran from the house to the shed, supported in the middle with sticks, and from the west corner of the house to the fence. The entire back yard was enclosed by an unpainted board fence, with irregularly spaced boards. The west side yard was extremely narrow. Only a remnant of the low wall, which filled the narrow space between the Birth Home and 497 Auburn Avenue, exists.

The Birth Home's main entrance opens on a small foyer that extends into a sidehall running the length of the house. On the east side of the hall (to the left as one enters) from front to back are a parlor, study, dining room, and kitchen. On the west side of the hall are stairs to the second floor and the basement and a bedroom and bath at the back. The second floor hall extends the length of the building, with three bedrooms on the east and one on the west.

Birth-Home Block

Most houses on the Birth-Home Block built in the 1890s exhibit Queen Anne features. Like the Birth Home, the two-story Harper house at 535 Auburn Avenue has a hipped principal roof and a front-facing gable projection. The gable end projects over a three-sided cutaway bay, with decorative sawn brackets in the overhangs. A porch with turned posts and a stick frieze runs across the front of the house. Other Queen Anne variations represented at the Site include two front-facing gables (518 Auburn Avenue), jigsawn wall panels (503 Auburn

---

[103]"Historic Structure Report: The Martin Luther King Birth Home, Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site, Atlanta, Georgia (Draft)" (Denver: Denver Service Center, National Park Service), Historical Data Section, 7.

[104]The location of the vegetable garden recently planted in back yard does not correspond to the probable historic location of the Kings' vegetable garden.

Avenue), and decorative trusswork in the gable end (514 Auburn Avenue). These houses demonstrate the visual variety achieved through combinations of mass-produced ornament in this period.

Distinctive landscape features associated with the Queen Anne houses include concrete front walks (518 Auburn Avenue), rear and side-yard walls of mixed rubble materials (510, 514, and 522 Auburn Avenue) and side-yard retaining walls to hold the grade of the front yard even with Auburn Avenue (526 and 530 Auburn Avenue). Granite steps with a thin marble cheek-wall treatment, dating from before 1915, are extant at the sidewalk of 503 Auburn Avenue. An early ornamental iron fence remains around the front and side yards of 530 Auburn Avenue. One of the last rear yard outbuildings/garages within the Site survives at 497 Auburn Avenue.

Several Site houses, built between 1890 and 1910, are vernacular types with limited decoration. These include a gable-front-and-wing house at 546 Auburn Avenue, a T-plan, side-gabled house with a hip roof rear portion at 540 Auburn Avenue, and gable-front houses at 24 and 28 Howell Street. Decoration on these houses is limited to the porches that exhibit turned or chamfered posts, brackets, and balustrades.

After 1900, few large single-family homes were built in the Auburn Avenue neighborhood. Middle-class blacks moved into existing single-family houses, and new construction for working-class blacks was limited to duplexes or small apartment buildings. Many duplexes were double shotgun houses, a common southern vernacular type. Twelve double shotgun houses are located within the Site.

Multiple-Family Residences--Shotguns

Appearing in New Orleans as early as the 1830s, the shotgun house was diffused throughout the South, at first along river trade routes and later in other areas. The type's greatest popularity came between 1880 and 1920, when it was a common choice for mill housing and for speculative developments marketed to working- class whites and blacks. The origins of the type have been debated by historians, some of whom have argued that slaves brought the type from West Africa to Haiti and then to New Orleans. Others have suggested that it

originated when the traditional hall and parlor plan was turned sideways to accommodate narrow urban lots.[105]

The defining characteristic of the shotgun type is a plan one room wide and two or three rooms deep. The name derives from this arrangement of rooms opening directly into one another. A shotgun blast fired through the front door supposedly would travel through the house and exit at the back without hitting a wall. The long, narrow configuration of the house made the type a good fit for narrow-frontage urban lots. Shotguns are one-story houses with a door and window on the front elevation and a hip or gable roof. Shotguns commonly exhibit engaged or attached front porches, typically gabled or shed. The chimneys are usually central. Many shotguns lack stylistic features, since they are utilitarian in nature, but some examples incorporate decorative millwork. The double shotgun house is a four-bay, duplex version consisting of two shotgun-plan flats under one roof, joined by a party wall. The porches, chimney placement, and entry location vary among double shotguns, which first appeared in New Orleans around 1850 and spread throughout the South.[106]

In 1905, the Empire State Investment Company purchased the western portion of the block bounded by Auburn Avenue, Boulevard, and Old Wheat Street and constructed nine double shotgun houses there. Built as speculative rental housing for whites, the double shotguns were all black-occupied by 1910.[107] As built, these double shotguns had hip roofs, weatherboard siding, and opposing, hipped front porches for each unit. Ornament was limited to turned posts and sawn brackets on the porches. Many single and double shotgun houses are located within the Preservation District, an area bounded by Old Wheat Street, Boulevard, Irwin Street, and Randolph Street. The shotgun houses within the Site and the Preservation District vary in ornamentation, roof type, number of rooms, and type of porches, but they all served as inexpensive, multiple-family dwellings for working-class blacks.

Landscape features historically associated with the double shotguns were swept (dirt) yards. No extant examples of this feature are found in the neighborhood.

---

[105]Roulhac Toledano, Sally Kittredge Evans, and Mary Louise Christovich, "Types and Styles," in *New Orleans Architecture*, vol. IV (Gretna, Louisiana: Pelican Publishing, 1974), 71-72; John Michael Vlach, "The Shotgun House: An African Architectural Legacy," in *Common Places: Readings in American Vernacular Architecture*, ed. Dell Upton and John Michael Vlach (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986), 58-77; McAlester and McAlester, 90.

[106]*The Shotgun House* (Louisville: Preservation Alliance of Louisville and Jefferson County, 1980), 5-7; Toledano, et al., 71-72.

[107]*Catalog of Historic Structures*, 66-68.

Paved and unpaved alleys and their associated infill structures were once common in the area; the alley and three double shotgun residences at 493 Auburn Avenue, rear, are the only surviving examples within the Site.

Apartments

In the 1920s and 1930s, a number of the single-family houses on Auburn were converted to apartments or rooming houses. Small apartment buildings were also constructed in this period. Three small apartment buildings, constructed between 1911 and 1933, are located at 491-493 Auburn Avenue, 506 Auburn Avenue, and 54 Howell Street. All are plain, two-story, rectangular structures with two-story porches, weatherboard siding, and hip or gable roofs. Built for working-class blacks, these buildings are utilitarian and largely unornamented. The flats in these buildings are generally small; those on the first floor have access directly from the porch, while central stair halls provide access to upper floors. These buildings probably offered shared bathrooms when built. The 1931 apartment building at 54 Howell Street has exposed rafters and triangular braces in the gable ends, features often associated with the Craftsman style, popular from approximately 1905 to 1930.

Commercial and Institutional Architectural Resources

The extant architectural resources of Edgewood Avenue are composed of one- and two-story commercial and light industrial buildings. Although much has been lost, surviving buildings represent two major periods of construction: 1905 to 1915 and 1939 to 1955. In total, there are twenty-nine buildings on Edgewood between Jackson and Howell streets, with sixteen constructed during this earlier period and six built during the latter period. The remaining thirteen were either constructed between these periods or followed the 1939-1955 period.

Commercial Buildings

The development of Edgewood Avenue as a commercial corridor at the beginning of this century is reflected in the late Victorian buildings which line the avenue. These were utilitarian buildings fashioned primarily in the Italianate style of architecture, similar to those constructed throughout the country at the turn of the century. Characteristics of this style include storefronts marked by broad expanses of glass and framed by columns or piers, round- and segmental-arched windows, horizontal stringcourses, flat rooflines, and projecting cornices. Exuberant ornamentation, such as an elaborately shaped pediment with finials, moldings and classical motifs, is commonly found on more prominent buildings or buildings located within the central business district.

Employing such decorative elements provided a means of distinguishing one's building from the surrounding urban fabric. The main facade, which is the point of contact between patron and product, was often used to create an image

or advertisement that would lure customers to the merchandise within. Signs were utilized to great effect and included hanging and projecting signs, awning and rooftop signs and signs painted on glass windows, doors and transoms as well as walls. Danneman's Supermarket at 464-468 Edgewood Avenue and 467 Edgewood contain the Site's finest examples of painted wall signs. Danneman's, constructed as a market in 1909, has a multicolored sign on the two-story west facade which depicts a loaf of bread and reads "Reach for Southern Goodness." The two-story rectangular block at 467 Edgewood was constructed ca. 1910 and contains white painted wall signs on most street-facing expanses of brick. "BROWN HAYS" and "DEPARTMENT STORE" are painted on the north facade with "BROWN HAYS COMPANY," "DEPARTMENT STORE," and "PARK YOUR CAR HERE/AND TAKE YOUR TIME" on the larger east elevation.

Signs such as these were common to the Edgewood Avenue commercial corridor, which during the early part of the twentieth century was largely composed of one- and two-story, rectangular brick buildings, considerably less exotic than their more high-style downtown counterparts.[108] Flat and shed roofs were concealed behind parapets with rear and side walls laid in common bond. These rear and side walls included irregularly placed sash windows and were left unadorned. Walls were built to the property line in order to maximize the interior square footage or selling space. This led to the construction of buildings directly adjacent to one another and, by 1911, a continuous row of storefronts existed on the south side of Edgewood, between Boulevard and Daniel Street. By 1928, this row of storefronts extended west to Fitzgerald Street.[109]

Storefronts of one-story buildings include large plate-glass display windows at ground level with a central, sometimes recessed, entrance composed of double wood-and-glass doors and a multiple-light transom. This arrangement is framed with plain brick piers and capped with a parapet that features a stamped metal cornice or decorative brickwork. 482 Edgewood, for example, is a one-story commercial building that was constructed in 1908 and used by a shoemaker, auto repair company, poultry company, and radio and television repair company. The main facade is essentially all glass and includes a central entrance flanked by

---

[108]The three-story second Grant Building of 1876, located at the corner of Marietta and Forsyth Streets, and the five-story Moore-Marsh Building of 1881, located at the corner of Edgewood Avenue and Pryor Street, combined elements of Italianate design with High Victorian Gothic decorative motifs. Both buildings have been demolished.

[109]*City of Atlanta* (map), Construction Department, Fulton County, Georgia (Atlanta: City of Atlanta, 1930), 25; Insurance map of Atlanta (New York: Sanborn-Perris Map Company, 1911), 459.

four plate glass windows which are topped by a band of nine fixed lights. Decorative elements consist of a stamped metal cornice, a corbeled brick cornice, and a recessed brick panel that contains decorative brickwork.

The primary facades of two-story commercial buildings are more complex as these buildings often serve more than one function. The larger facades of these buildings also offer greater surface area to develop a decorative scheme. The symmetrical plate-glass display windows and recessed entrances are similar to those of the one-story commercial buildings, though access to the second floor, which usually contained living quarters, is placed between the storefront and a side pier. The second floors are distinguished from the first floors with stamped metal cornices and feature double and triple windows set within segmental or flat brick arches. Decorative brickwork is found throughout the upper facade and cornice. There are seven extant commercial buildings on Edgewood Avenue, dating from 1905 to 1915, which were constructed as duplexes. One was designed to house three businesses.

485 Edgewood Avenue, built by B. D. Watkins in 1908, is part of a row that spans four buildings from 483 to 493 Edgewood Avenue. This two-story, rectangular brick building exhibits many elements characteristic of early commercial architecture on Edgewood Avenue. The facade is essentially symmetrical with the recessed store entrance flanked by display windows, a second floor entrance placed to one side, and a prominent cornice capping the storefront. The second floor is punctuated with three double windows that are accented with rusticated stone sills and flat brick arches. The corbeled brick cornice is typical of the modest decorative schemes found on smaller buildings outside the city's central business district.

487-489 Edgewood, built by B. D. Watkins in 1909, is a duplex that exhibits an exterior organization similar to that of 485 Edgewood. The storefronts, in fact, are nearly identical, although the second level of each unit is composed of two triple windows and the brickwork on the upper facade and cornice is more elaborate. The Roane Building of 1906, at 537-541 Edgewood Avenue, is the Site's most richly decorated commercial building. The main facade of the second story is composed of two planes and is organized around a three-part, basket-arched window. Flanking sash windows are capped with flat brick arches and terra-cotta finials and egg-and-dart hoods. The uppermost part of the facade contains terra-cotta rondels in the upper corners that feature cornucopia and floral motifs, a corbeled upper facade, and the name and date of the building.

476-480 Edgewood Avenue, built by W. H. Roane in 1909, is the only building in the Site designed to house three businesses. All three stores front Edgewood, with the most prized retail space occupying the corner, fronting both Edgewood and Boulevard. This entrance is angled into the corner, which provides optimum street exposure and shelter from the overhanging upper story. The storefronts

of 478 and 480 are designed, like others in the area, with large display windows flanking entrances and a stamped metal cornice above. The second story contains two double windows with round heads. These are set within a larger brick arch which features corbeled brick details and an oversize keystone. The upper facade is marked by a horizontal brick panel, corbeled brick brackets, and a rusticated stone cornice that lines the parapet.

The Edgewood Avenue commercial buildings constructed between 1939 and 1955 either lack the integrity to be considered eligible for listing or do not meet the fifty-year eligibility requirement. Ivie's Garage, 438-442 Edgewood Avenue, constructed in 1939, is the only Edgewood Avenue property that meets both the integrity and age criteria. Two properties, at 458 and 510 Edgewood Avenue, although slightly less than fifty years old, are exceptional local examples of styles and are thus eligible.

Public and Ecclesiastical Buildings

The Site contains a limited number of public and ecclesiastical buildings that date to the period of significance. Several historic structures have recently become public buildings associated with the administration of the Site, such as the Visitor Center at 522 Auburn Avenue. Other buildings, such as the Baptist Memorial Institute School, a school for black children located on the south side of Auburn Avenue at the east end of the Birth-Home Block, have been razed. Those buildings that survive include Atlanta Fire Station Number Six, Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church, and Ebenezer Baptist Church.

Fire Station Number Six is a two-story Romanesque Revival style building erected in 1894 at 37-39 Boulevard. It is one in a series of neighborhood station houses constructed from approximately 1890 to 1920. These are two-story, rectangular brick buildings with a shed roof and decorative parapet. Similar to commercial buildings of this period, side and rear walls are generally left plain with most of the decorative elements found on the main facade. At the first floor level, these facades are marked by pedestrian entrances, windows, and one or two arched engine bays. Second-story sash windows are grouped together above the engine bays. The Romanesque Revival and Italianate styles of architecture are often combined through elaborate brickwork that includes pilasters, corbels, panels, and door and window surrounds.

The Romanesque Revival design of Station Number Six is suggested by the wide brick arches which frame the single engine bay and the band of five arched, second-story windows above. This style is further characterized by the asymmetrically placed tower, which includes a date panel, and the machicolated cornice. The diaper-patterned frieze, found on both the Boulevard and Auburn Avenue elevations, is the most inventive example of the elaborate brickwork found throughout the building.

At 29 Boulevard, just south of the fire station, is a three-story building constructed in 1912 to house a Catholic Church and School. It was built under the leadership of Father Ignatius Lissner and was intended to serve the surrounding black community. The ground floor was designed as a church, the second floor housed the school, and the third floor contained the auditorium. Worship services are now conducted in a nonhistoric structure at 19 Boulevard.[110]

Our Lady of Lourdes is a plain, hip-roofed building faced with stone at the first floor level and displaying English bond brickwork on the floors above. The exterior ornamentation is largely associated with the brick lintels and corbeled surrounds of the windows. The two- and three-part jalousie windows are probably not original. The first-floor sash windows feature flat stone arches.

Ebenezer Baptist Church, located at 407-413 Auburn Avenue, is part of a tradition of church building that existed in the Sweet Auburn community in the first decades of the twentieth century. Big Bethel A.M.E. Church of 1904 and 1924, located at 220 Auburn Avenue, Wheat Street Baptist Church of 1920-1923, located at 365 Auburn Avenue, and Ebenezer of 1914-1922, are substantial buildings erected by a prosperous black community and built in the popular styles of their day. That these buildings soar above Auburn Avenue suggests both their spiritual importance and their place in the early twentieth century Sweet Auburn skyline.

Ebenezer was designed in the Gothic Revival style of architecture. Popular in the United States as a residential style from 1840-1880, Gothic Revival remained a common choice for ecclesiastical buildings well into the twentieth century. Although Gothic forms never completely disappeared in English church architecture, Gothic reemerged as a style of architecture during the middle of the eighteenth century with the work of William Kent and Horace Walpole.[111] Nearly a century later, it was promoted in the United States by Alexander Jackson Davis. Its popularity increased, however, through the work of Andrew Jackson Downing, whose pattern books, *Cottage Residences, Rural Architecture and Landscape Gardening* of 1842 and *The Architecture of Country Houses* of 1850,

---

[110]Ambrose, et al., Part I, 2-19.

[111]William H. Pierson, Jr., *Technology and the Picturesque, the Corporate and the Early Gothic Styles,* vol. 2 of *American Buildings and Their Architects* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 100.

circulated widely.[112] Lyndhurst, the Tarrytown, New York residence designed by Davis in 1838 and 1865, and Richard Upjohn's Trinity Church in New York City of 1839-1846 are among the most influential buildings of the period and include such elements as pointed-arched window openings, wall buttresses, towers, castellated parapets, and steeply pitched roofs. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, Upjohn's archeological approach to church design gave way to more eclectic church buildings. Later Gothic Revival churches include both traditional Gothic design elements, elements borrowed from other styles, and original motifs.

Ebenezer is a two-story, rectangular brick church with two large towers at each end of the Auburn Avenue facade. These towers flank a steeply pitched gable roof that contains two pairs of cross gables. The southernmost pair corresponds to a transept and contains a large, three-part Gothic window in each gable end. The brickwork at the lower level is covered with gray stucco and scored to resemble stone.

The main facade is essentially divided into three bays. The towers, which comprise the two outer bays, are buttressed at the first and second levels and contain stained glass and louvered lancet windows. Merlons are located in the corners of the tower parapets. The center bay contains the main entrance at ground level, three narrow, stained-glass windows at the second level, and a three-part Gothic window in the gable end.

Two-story buttresses divide the side elevations into nine bays, with the tower comprising the northernmost bay and the chancel expressed in the southernmost bay. These bays are punctuated at the lower level by segmental-arched windows with the second-floor bays marked by tall, stained-glass windows. Brick panels mark the division between the first and second floors.

The rear elevation has been largely obscured by a one-story, hip-roofed addition built in 1971. An oculus, located high in the gable end, remains visible. The two-story Education Building, constructed in 1956 and rehabilitated in 1971, similarly obscures the east elevation. Brick beltcourses, panels, corbels, and window hoods ornament the front and side elevations of Ebenezer and to a lesser extent the Education Building. Brick ornamentation of this type is common in public and commercial buildings throughout the Sweet Auburn community from the early part of the twentieth century through the 1930s.

---

[112]Andrew Jackson Downing, *Cottage Residence, Rural Architecture and Landscape Gardening* (New York, 1842), and *The Architecture of Country Houses* (New York, 1850).

The church auditorium is located at the second level, above the below-grade meeting hall. It is an open, rectangular space, with the pulpit and choir elevated on a platform and a balcony across the rear of the sanctuary. The walls are white plaster, and the pitched ceiling is pressed metal, also painted white. The gently sloped floor is oak and contains a central and two narrower side ranks of pews. Transepts feature stained glass portraits of Rev. A. D. Williams and Rev. Martin Luther King, Sr.

2. Criteria Considerations/Integrity

Site building evaluations are based on the degree to which they either embody the pattern of features that defines each building type described in the Context C narrative or represent an individual variation within the broader type. Integrity is a key component in the evaluations of eligibility. All buildings possess integrity of location since no buildings within the Site have been moved. Integrity of setting varies from property to property, depending on the alteration of the immediate landscape. However, on the whole, the Birth-Home block and the Edgewood Avenue corridor maintain a high degree of setting integrity since the historic streetscapes and residential landscapes are intact. Few modern intrusions are present. Lists of contributing and noncontributing properties appear below. Buildings determined noncontributing because of a lack of integrity and two buildings that are exceptions to the usual fifty-year requirement are discussed in this section.

A number of Site properties are not eligible because they have lost integrity. A fire severely damaged 18 Howell Street, leaving gaping holes in the walls and destroying its integrity. The duplex at 479-481 Old Wheat, which has been converted to a single-family residence and has a wholly reconstructed porch, also lacks sufficient integrity. The duplex at 492-494 Edgewood is not eligible because virtually all of its historic fabric was replaced in a reconstruction. Under the criteria consideration governing reconstructed properties, a reconstruction is eligible only if it is accurately executed, the building is presented as part of a restoration master plan, and no other building with the same associations survives. Because numerous other residential properties on the Birth-Home block carry the same associative values, 492-494 Edgewood is ineligible.

The facade ornamentation and storefronts are the primary architectural features of the commercial buildings on Edgewood Avenue. Where facades and storefronts have been substantially altered, integrity no longer exists. Alterations to 462 Edgewood Avenue have left little trace of the original storefront, making the building noneligible. The filling station at 479 Edgewood is not eligible because it has lost its canopy and other architectural details. The original storefront of 484 Edgewood has been replaced by a contemporary glass and metal facade, making the building not eligible. This is also the case with 513

Edgewood, where a remodeling has left no trace of the original facade and fenestration.

Two Site properties are eligible although they do not meet the fifty-year requirement, because they are of exceptional importance for local architecture as defined under Criteria Consideration G. 458 Edgewood, built in 1946, is an exceptional example of the Art Moderne style, rarely used for commercial buildings in Atlanta. Additionally, the building is an early example of a drive-up business. The building retains its round windows, canopy with metal coping, and streamlined appearance. 510 Edgewood Avenue (1947) is an outstanding early Atlanta example of International style architecture. International style elements include ribbon windows, horizontal lines, and a composition of simple rectangular masses. These two buildings fail to meet the fifty-year rule by four and five years, respectively, and are eligible because they are exceptional examples of styles uncommon in Atlanta.

3. Contributing Properties under Context C*

Residential Buildings

Georgian Cottage with Italianate Elements

521 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1886)
521½ Auburn Avenue, store building (ca. 1920)

Double Shotgun Houses

472-474 Auburn Avenue (1905)
476-478 Auburn Avenue (1905)
480-482 Auburn Avenue (1905)
484-486 Auburn Avenue (1905)
488 Auburn Avenue (1905)
53-55 Boulevard (1905)
483-485 Old Wheat Street (1905)
487-489 Old Wheat Street (1905)
493 Auburn Avenue, Rear, Units 1-6 (1911)

Single-Family Houses with Queen Anne Elements

497 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1900)
Birth Home, 501 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1894)
503 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1895)
510 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1890) and back yard wall

*See Section 7 for building descriptions.

514 Auburn Avenue (1893) and side yard wall
518 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1893)
522 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1894) and side yard wall
526 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1895)
530 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1895) and side yard wall (ca. 1895-1945)
535 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1895)
550 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1890)

Vernacular Houses and Apartment Buildings

491-493 Auburn Avenue (1911)
506 Auburn Avenue (1933)
515 Auburn Avenue (1909)
540 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1890)
546 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1890)
53 Hogue Street (ca. 1940)
14 Howell Street (ca. 1927)
24 Howell Street (ca. 1895)
28 Howell Street (ca. 1895)
54 Howell Street (ca. 1931)

Commercial Buildings

420 Edgewood Avenue (1912)
438-442 Edgewood Avenue (1939)
439-441 Edgewood Avenue (1920)
443-445 Edgewood Avenue (1909)
444-446 Edgewood Avenue (1909)
447 Edgewood Avenue (1909)
451 Edgewood Avenue (1915)
458 Edgewood Avenue (1946)
464-468 Edgewood Avenue (1909)
467 Edgewood Avenue (1911)
476-480 Edgewood Avenue (1909)
482 Edgewood Avenue (1908)
483 Edgewood Avenue (1908)
485 Edgewood Avenue (1908)
487 Edgewood Avenue (1909)
488 Edgewood Avenue (1909)
489 Edgewood Avenue (1909)
510 Edgewood Avenue (1947)
537-541 Edgewood Avenue (1906)

Public and Ecclesiastical Buildings

Ebenezer Baptist Church, 407-413 Auburn Avenue (1914-1922)
Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church, 29 Boulevard (1912)
Atlanta Fire Station Number Six, 37-39 Boulevard (1894)

4. Noncontributing Properties

449 Auburn Avenue, 2 buildings (1971-1981)
492-494 Auburn Avenue
531 Auburn Avenue, 2 buildings (1954)
19-29 Boulevard (3 buildings)
421-429 Edgewood Avenue (1946)
428 Edgewood Avenue
462 Edgewood Avenue (1927)
479 Edgewood Avenue (1932)
484 Edgewood Avenue (1908)
494 Edgewood Avenue
501 Edgewood Avenue
502-504 Edgewood Avenue
509 Edgewood Avenue
513 Edgewood Avenue (1920)
520 Edgewood Avenue
521 Edgewood Avenue
525 Edgewood Avenue (1948)
528 Edgewood Avenue
536 Edgewood Avenue (1951)
479-481 Old Wheat Street, ca. (1905)

Boundary Justification

Historic district boundaries for the Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site closely follow the bounds authorized in the 1980 federal legislation that established the National Historic Site. These bounds define areas of high integrity with significant concentrations of historic resources. The Martin Luther King, Jr., Community Center plaza, located on the north side of Auburn Avenue opposite Ebenezer Baptist Church, is excluded from the district. Its open grassed court is a visual disruption and lacks the historic integrity of the more closely spaced structures that characterize much of the Site.

On October 30, 1992, the boundary of the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site was expanded in an effort to acquire and preserve Ebenezer Baptist Church and provide parking for the increasing number of visitors to the Site. The boundary expansion area includes approximately 14 additional acres north of the Community Center plaza between Jackson Street and Boulevard. Many of the expansion area's fifteen early-twentieth-century commercial and industrial buildings are currently unoccupied and in disrepair. The interior alleys are no longer discernable, and streetscapes are defined by the vacant lots separating most structures. Only part of one building remains on the north side of Cain Street, for example, where construction of the Presidential Parkway has hastened the destruction of buildings on that side of the street.

The boundary expansion area was excluded from the original district nomination because its integrity was compromised by the earlier removal of period structures, leaving discontinuous remnants intact. None of the expansion-area properties was found to meet the minimum requirements for National Register eligibility under Criterion C. Three properties do not meet the 50-year requirement. No structure is the work of a master and none possesses high artistic merit. The structures also do not embody distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, because all properties have problems of integrity relating to design, setting, feeling, or association. The boundary expansion area is excluded from the district.

Clemson University
3 1604 010 052 084

DATE DUE

APR 1 3 1996

APR 2 6 REC'D

Demco, Inc. 38-294